Saturday Review

WHY NOT OPERA IN ENGLISH?

By HOWARD DIETZ

DECEMBER 27, 1952 TWENTY CENTS

Shirley Booth, star of "Come Back, Little Sheba." (See page 26)

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Year of the Long Autumn

By LON TINKLE

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The Saturday Review

DECEMBER 27, 1952

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HAVE YOU MADE your plans for New Year's Eve? If not, why not stay home and read? It's one sure way to avoid both the forced gaiety of the night before and the unforced regrets of the morning after.

¶ Of course, you should not let the occasion pass entirely unnoticed. Along about midnight you can set aside your book for half an hour or so. Turn on your TV set and watch, unjostled, the crowds in Times Square. At the same time, listen, without smoke in your eyes, confetti in your hair, or a cover charge on your mind, while Guy Lombardo plays "Auld Lang Syne" on the radio. If the spirit moves you, open a window and bang a kitchen pan in the direction of your noisiest neighbors. At midnight precisely, lift a glass of Amontillado. While you have it raised, drink it.

¶ That is the sort of New Year's Eve I plan to spend myself. And it may not surprise you to learn that I have already selected my book for the major part of the evening. It is Christopher Morley's "Parnassus on Wheels," which I consider the best novel ever written about books and bookmen, just as Morley is one of the finest writers about reading. There are always critics to say what is wrong about books. But there are too few writers with Morley's ability to communicate enthusiasm for a book in such a way that you want not only to read it, but also to own it. My shelves—like those, I am sure, of many of my contemporaries—bear witness to his influence.

¶ "Parnassus On Wheels" is Morley's best book. In 1952 it reached its 35th year in print, an achievement that just about makes a book (if not, happily, a reader) a classic. It is available in the Modern Library, and also, with its sequel, "The Haunted Bookshop," in a single volume published by Doubleday.

¶ Read it, or some other book, on New Year's Eve. The night club owners will thank you for not overcrowding their places. And you, I am sure, will thank me. In any event, Happy New Year.

L. L. Day

EDITOR-AT-LARGE

¶ This space has been reserved by Doubleday, of 575 Madison Ave., N. Y. C. 22, for periodic informal comments on books.

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TRADE Winds

YEAR-END MISCELLANY

BERNARD DEVOTO, author of "The Course of Empire," visited the editors of the *Herald Tribune Book Review* just a few days before election, armed with a very hot tip. He had just come from North Dakota, he reported, and the Republicans in that state were squabbling so bitterly among themselves that the Democrats were going to carry it for the first time in the memory of any living inhabitant. "You can get big odds on this," he counseled, "so haul out your life savings and prepare to make a killing."

He couldn't have been more mistaken, as events disclosed, and the day after the returns were posted Belle Rosenbaum, able assistant editor of the *Review,* and equally famous for her wit and her daughter Robin, wired DeVoto, "Life savings dissipated through following your erroneous advice. Can you help out with some ready cash?" His answer came on a two-cent postal. "I note that you can still afford a telegram," wrote DeVoto bitterly. "I had to borrow the money for this post card!"

SPEAKING AT A HERALD TRIBUNE Book and Author luncheon at the Hotel Astor recently to whoop it up for my new book of anecdotes, "Good for a Laugh" (I really think it's my best collection since "Try and Stop Me"), I found myself sharing honors with Elizabeth Gray Vining, whose story of how she helped educate the Crown Prince of Japan in the year after World War II reads like a modern-day "Anna and the King of Siam," and Bob Moses, the peppery park commissioner of New York. Bob probably could be the next mayor of New York, were he so inclined, but his wife Mary says, "Nothing doing!" Other likely candidates for the job: Frank Hogan and Rudolph Halley. . . . Bob Moses told a story about a visit the late Heywood Broun paid to Havana. He was picked up strolling along the Malecon by a repulsive little man with a line of "feelthy peetchurs" and the address of a house where the "most beautiful girls in Havana" were prepared to put on a show that would make the asbestos curtain go up in smoke. "Fat American papa no can afford to mees thees hot stuff," he insisted. "Fat American papa" tried unsuccessfully to shake him off for three blocks, finally turned on him in exasperation, and announced, "In Havana, Heywood Broun is an *actor,* not a critic!"

ANOTHER MEMBER of the immortal Algonquin Round Table crew, Robert Benchley, is the subject of an aside by Arthur Mayer in his book of Hollywood reminiscences, "Merely Colossal" (to be published in February by S. & S.) Mayer dropped in to visit Benchley at the Garden of Allah on Sunset Boulevard on a cloudless day with the temperature at the 95-degree mark, but found him holed up in his bungalow under a sun lamp. "What's the matter with the real sun and a little fresh air?" asked Mayer. "I don't trust nature," shuddered Benchley. "You never can tell what's going to fall on you in the great outdoors. Meteors for instance. Or manna!" . . . Mayer owns the Rialto Theatre in New York, which specializes, he says, in pictures of the "thud and blunder" type. He's also made a packet importing some of the best Italian films to these shores. . . .

1952 WILL BE REMEMBERED as the year in which a number of wealthy Babbitts—candor compels the admission that a few of them actually were publishers themselves—voluntarily shelled out five hundred dollars each for a series of "deluxe" books obtainable, for the most part, in infinitely more varied, pleasing, and convenient formats at anywhere from one tenth to one quarter the price, and that will, in conservatively 90 per cent of the homes of the purchasers, remain uncracked and ignored until kingdom come . . . The John Phillips whose first novel, "The Second Happiest Day," has been tapped for February distribution by the Book-of-the-Month Club is actually John P. Marquand, Jr. His distinguished father, a judge of the BOMC, refrained from voting when the book was the order of the day, but was mighty tickled when the other judges gave it the nod . . . The publishers of Chic Sale's "The Specialist" (remember?) relay the depressing news that demand remains constant, and the millionth copy is now in the hands of some presumably convulsed reader. . . .

FRANÇOIS MAURIAC, French winner of this year's Nobel Prize in Literature, will have his most important novel, "The Kiss of the Leper," published here, for the first time, by Pellegrini and Cudahy in the early spring. It was written in 1921 . . . Par Lagerkvist,

winner of the Nobel Prize last year, will be represented on Random's new list with a volume of short stories, "The Hangman and Other Stories." His novel, "Barabbas," sold three thousand copies before he won the award, thirteen thousand additional thereafter. Lagerkvist turned down an American offer of $50,000 for the film rights of "Barabbas," gave them for a pittance to an old friend in Sweden. The picture will be ready for release next fall . . . Upton Sinclair's "Lanny Budd" makes more farewell appearances than Buffalo Bill. Viking announces "The Return of Lanny Budd" for immediate publication. It's the eleventh in a popular series. . . .

ABE FELLER, the brilliant general counsel of the United Nations, who, plagued by worry, overwork, and a sense of frustration, jumped to his death recently, is the author of "United Nations and World Community," a Little, Brown publication. *The Times Book Review* hailed it as "unquestionably the best book published on the operations of the U. N." Sincere admirers of Feller can memorialize his contributions to world peace—and swell the royalty check to his estate—by buying copies of his book. . . . Wes Lawrence, star columnist of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer,* comes up with a Carol Kelly clerihew that may start the fad all over again:

> Moll Flanders, as you know,
> Is by Daniel Defoe.
> Moll's children are by
> Any man who is nigh.

Lawrence, incidentally, has a new columnist competing with him on the *Cleveland Press*—none other than the erudite Joe Newman, author of the just-published (by World) "Perishable Poems."

COREY FORD'S WONDERFULLY FUNNY "Every Dog Should Have a Man" (Holt) makes it clear that there's nothing like a well-behaved gent around the house to spread the dog's blanket for him or bring him his sup-

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Where Do You Want To Go?

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Read what the Christian Science Monitor says about a new way to travel that sometimes costs ⅓ to ½ less.

BY *THE travel editor of The Christian Science Monitor:* Many fascinating travel booklets pass over this desk in the course of a year but the one that arrived the other day so interested this department that it cost the office several hours of work in order that we might absorb its content. The booklet is entitled "Travel Routes Around the World" and is the traveler's directory to passenger-carrying freighters and liners. In no time at all you find yourself far out to sea cruising along under tropical skies without a care in the world. You find yourself docking at strange ports and taking land tours to those places you long have read about. Most interesting of the vast listings of ships are the freighters which carry a limited number of passengers in quarters comparable to the luxury offered in the so-called big cruise ships which devote most of their space for passengers.

The booklet first of all answers the question: What is a freighter? The modern freighter, says the booklet, ranks with the de luxe passenger vessels so far as comfort and accommodations are concerned.

LARGE ROOMS WITH BEDS

It is important to realize that in most cases today, freighter passengers are considered first-class passengers, although the rates charged are generally on a par with either cabin or tourist class fare. Most passenger-carrying freighters, to quote the booklet, have their private bath and shower, and these cabins offer beds, not bunks. The rooms are generally larger than equivalent accommodations aboard passenger ships, and the cabin of a modern freighter is sometimes even twice as large as first-class cabins on some of the older passenger ships. It goes without saying that your room is on the outside, and amidships, the most expensive of all locations, for which you are usually charged a premium over the advertised minimum fares on passenger ships.

This booklet points out that it is frequently astonishing how low freighter fares are as compared with passenger ship fares: for example, less than one-half of the passenger ship fare to California is the amount asked on freighters. On most of the longer runs, the difference in favor of the freighters is regularly from a third to half of the passenger ship fare.

SERVICE AND MEALS RATED EXCELLENT

Service and meals on a freighter leave little to be desired. You will be treated with consideration. Stewards will go out of their way to make your voyage pleasant. On ships with East Indian stewards you will be waited on almost hand and foot, in a manner that is completely unknown to Americans and most Europeans.

Foreign ships offer their own specialties, says the booklet. Thus vessels in the East Indian trade serve Rijkstafel (or King's Table), the East Indian dish which can run to as many as 50 different courses. Scandinavian ships serve Smorgasbord every day, and some of their desserts (like strawberries smothered in a huge bowl of whipped cream) are never forgotten. Another feature of freighter travel is in its informality. No formal clothes are needed. Sport clothes are enough.

Other valuable information such as how to tip, shipboard activities and costs are covered in the booklet, "Travel Routes Around the World."

Some of the trips listed include a trip to England for $160, a 12-day Caribbean cruise for $240, or a leisurely three-month Mediterranean voyage.

The booklet is published by Harian Publications, Greenlawn, New York, and may be obtained by sending to the publisher.

So, when it arrives all you need to do is sit down and take your choice. The booklet lists literally hundreds of ocean trips.

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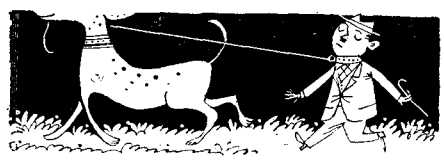
per when he comes home man-tired at night. Properly trained, any man can be a dog's best friend.

Personally, Corey belongs to a large English setter, who has taught Corey to shake hands with him, take him out in the middle of the night when the fancy strikes him, and bang his head on desks and TV sets to retrieve balls for him merely by exercising patience. In contrast, Corey had a friend who was owned by a cocker spaniel, and was handled very badly when the dog first got him. For example, if the friend didn't come across



with a succulent steak bone on schedule, the dog would snarl at him and occasionally give him the old ankle number. As a result, the friend became dog-shy and would cringe under the sofa whenever he saw the dog coming. The spaniel finally had to give him away.

"If a person will just take the trouble to master a few clever parlor tricks, such as 'roll over' and 'sit up and beg'," counsels Mr. Ford, "he'll find that the dog, albeit reluctantly, will ultimately enter into the spirit of the thing. Every night, for instance, my setter and I have a little game of hide-and-seek. He takes my bedroom slippers and runs off with them, and I spend the next couple of hours hobbling around the house in my bare feet, colliding with rocking-chair runners, and plaintively calling to him now and then, 'Where did you hide them, boy? Bring them back, now; that's a good dog.' This keeps the setter mildly amused—and the bending over is good for my waistline. Sometimes I even find the slippers."

If you, too, have friends who belong to dogs, send them copies of Corey Ford's little book. They'll chalk it up as your good deed of the month.

LELAND STOWE, author of "Conquest by Terror," reports that he's never met a happier G.I. than a lad who's halfway through basic training in a Southern encampment. "One morning," he exulted, "who do we find assigned to our barracks but a beautiful blonde!" "What was she—a WAC?" asked Stowe incredulously. "Not at all," said the G.I. "She's just one of the 'boys.' Does the regular routine, eats and sleeps like one of us, even takes showers where we do." "How does she get away with it?" wondered Stowe. The G.I. winked and whispered, "Who's gonna snitch?"

—BENNETT CERF.

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Year of the Long Autumn

A Reviewer Wanders Through 1952

LON TINKLE

THE American book year in 1952 was like a long autumn the whole year round, and a new sobriety of tone was everywhere evident. The best books were written, in general, by seasoned oldsters—it was a year of comebacks rather than a season of forked-lightning debuts. Those who expected history to repeat itself and to yield up postwar equivalents to the flashing beginnings made by such writers as Thomas Wolfe, Scott Fitzgerald, and Thornton Wilder after World War I were disappointed. The major successes of 1952 came from veterans in another sense; and these successes were often about old men and such eternal things as the sea and Eden, and, yes, religious experience.

In the absence of morning-time freshnesses, however, there are many compensations. A surprisingly large quota of mellow and excellent books got published during this past book year.

"Mellow" would seem to be the word. It characterizes, however vaguely and superficially, such dissimilar but notable books as Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea," Bernard Berenson's "Rumor and Reflection," Reinhold Niebuhr's "The Irony of American History," and, what was for us the stylistic delight of the year, James Thurber's "Thurber Album." (The single exception that may serve to prove our generalization is that angry novel by a newcomer of uncommon talent—"Invisible Man," by Ralph Ellison.)

What was most immediately striking about the fiction of 1952 was its search for patterns of experience rather than romantically different individual destinies—patterns provided by the symbolism of Christian religion. Both Steinbeck in "East of Eden" and Hemingway in "The Old Man and the Sea" evoked Biblical parallels for their account of particular destinies, and both suggested that the identity of human experience, whether in the Garden of Eden or the Salinas Valley or the Caribbean, gives life meaning and substance. Steinbeck's use of the Cain and Abel pattern was of course direct and integral to the form and content of his novel; Hemingway, as usual, was more subtle and implicit. But the suggestion of the wisdom of Jesus's humility and courage was present in "The Old Man and the Sea," and it remained for Carlos Baker in *The Saturday Review* (in what was probably the best book review of the year) to state most clearly the symbols of Hemingway's present brooding over Christian thought.

To clarify, let us risk a formula. (After all, book reviewers can no more resist the impulse to find patterns than can novelists.) One might hazard the formula that by 1952 a significant tendency has become a definite trend, that trend being the urge on the part of our creative minds to find in the dramas of human destiny not the spectacular differences but some underlying, unifying sense of identity. Man, so to speak, not just men. The religious spirit of course has always stressed this identity.

"I am different" ("*Je suis autre*"), Rousseau wrote on the first page of his "Confessions," and this simple phrase provided a crucial part of the credo of romanticism. It is still a basic tenet of existentialism in France. But on increasing evidence in American writing, one may say that a religious feeling for the oneness of mankind is clearly as significent a truth as the perception of separateness in our various existences. Other American writers during the year who sought out patterns, who forsook the pressure and the magic of the immediate moment to view the mythic and repeated patterns of Christian experience, ranged from such diverse writers as Gladys Schmitt in "Confessors of the Name" to Thomas B. Costain in "The Silver Chalice" and Robert Raynolds in "The Sinner of Saint Ambrose."

TO pursue the pleasure, if also the futility, of pat formulas, it is worth noticing that the book year opened with an erudite search into the American past, Van Wyck Brooks's "The Confident Years: 1885-1915,' and the year concluded with an equally

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Lon Tinkle is book editor of the Dallas News *and professor of French at Southern Methodist University.*

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erudite and far more vital and vigorous survey of the frontier concept of history, Walter Prescott Webb's "The Great Frontier." Both these veteran scholars, the former somewhat lost in nostalgic antiquarianism as he casts off what is for him an appalling contemporary world, are excessively pessimistic, it seems to us, about the modern scene. Brooks deplored what European "negation" has done to damage the typically American sense of "affirmation." (His special targets are T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Gertrude Stein.) Webb, too, thinks the passing of the Great Frontier has placed America, as indeed the whole world, in an unsolvable dilemma: Where do we go from here? Europe, faced in 1500 with the same crisis, went to the New World. Alas, there are no New Worlds left, says Webb.

Well, our inclination is to let the saints, the poets, and the sages solve the problems of the world. We submit that their contributions in 1952 were both exhilarating and significant, all the way from Niebuhr to that famous fisherman called Ernest Hemingway.

Not wishing to be too cryptic, we should say that the testimony of many serious artists during this past year indicates that they are, in their absorption with patterns and identities, less concerned with New Worlds and Great Frontiers than with the notion of One World.

With 1952's religious frame of reference in writing it is not surprising to find numerous evidences of moral earnestness in the best-seller lists at season's end. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible, an old favorite making a comeback in a new guise, Catherine Marshall's biography of her late chaplain-husband, "A Man Called Peter," and clergyman Norman Vincent Peale's "The Power of Positive Thinking" are all three right at the top. For a long time the most discussed book in this country was Whittaker Chambers's "Witness," a book whose moral earnestness—unlike its thinking—was unquestionable. Two fine historical novels from England—Edith Simon's "The Golden Hand" and H. F. M. Prescott's "The Man on a Donkey"—dealt with religious feeling centuries ago. And a mature and major work, W. T. Stace's "Religion and the Modern Mind," said on a philosophical level what so many creative writers were saying symbolically.

Yet with all its moral earnestness, 1952 gave not a few signs of disturbing fanaticism and bigotry. Even the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was the occasion for book burnings over the country. and protest against change of any sort.

Perhaps naturally in an election year, even the tendency to persist in questioning the single-minded was regarded as ipso facto a matter of guilt. Assertion without demonstration became so commonplace a mood in writing that even the Churchillian eloquence of Governor Stevenson was not compensation enough for this disturbing trend.

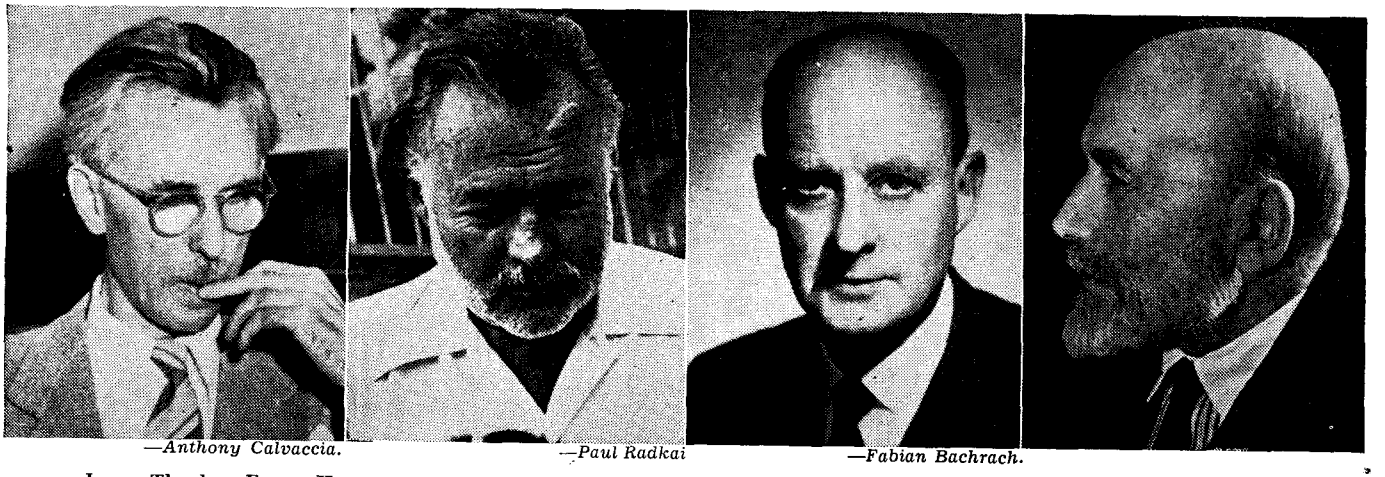
STILL another evidence of the year's religious flavor was the award of the Nobel Prize to François Mauriac, who like Graham Greene closely affiliates his artistic work with his Catholic faith. That the world's supreme literary award should have gone to Mauriac was at least debatable, so long as Croce and Santayana were still alive. Both have since died, but we suspect that when the Swedish academy was making up its mind, they were both still eligible for the rewards of this world.

But perhaps it is always unfair, in regard to prize awards, to play the game of "who else should have had it." It seems there is nearly always someone else. In the present case we are willing to stick our neck out, in the prospect of almost certain counterblasts, and suggest that among Mauriac's own fellow-countrymen, the Nobel committee might have accoladed, above all, Colette, or even André Malraux or Georges Duhamel or Jules Romains.

To end this quibbling, the publication on December 1 of "The Collected Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot" was an adequate reminder that the Nobel prize did literature a handsome service in 1948 when Eliot was belaureled. The volume is a sharp reminder that even prize committees can distinguish the poet from the poeticule, the artist from the writer, the thinker from the platitudinizer. Eliot's work is the primary rebuke to the first clause of the notion so current to the effect that "the American is the prisoner of the present, just as the European is the captive of the past."

In our mellow, autumnal year, many other instances abound to disprove our absorption in the here and now. We are not speaking of such things as Benjamin Thomas's brilliant one-volume "Abraham Lincoln," a masterly summation of the career of an artist-statesman, with all the gropings an artist is entitled to; nor of the fifth volume of Douglas Southall Freeman's monumental biography of George Washington, nor of the other excellent special studies on Lincoln and other American heroes, nor of Bernard DeVoto's "The Course of Empire," which interprets our past in terms of geopolitics instead of manifest destiny.

The past that seemed so popular in 1952 was a sort of vanished American life-style. This life, as it existed in the Middle West, formed the core of that admirable volume of James Thurber, "The Thurber Album." Thurber's ancestors, whose chronicler he is, were men and women whose life-center was represented by the city of Washington. One of Thurber's



—Anthony Calvaccia. —Paul Radkai —Fabian Bachrach.

James Thurber, Ernest Hemingway, Reinhold Niebuhr, Bernard Berenson—". . . 'mellow' would seem to be the word."

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"characters" went to Washington on July 4, 1825, and shook hands not just with President John Quincy Adams, but also with four ex-Presidents! The metropolis-loving Thurber, the man whose life is centered around New York, fondly evokes a life-style whose simplicity and generosity differ from the virtues which we may claim today. But Thurber can still sandpaper down a sentence as well as Hemingway, and make his phrase vibrate with its concentrate of precision and point. Perhaps what made "The Thurber Album" so effective was its fond but unsentimental perception of family life—and the implicit sorrow that much of what that phrase meant has gone.

Even so recent a past as the Twenties seemed like a nostalgic recall in John K. Hutchens's excellent anthology, "The American Twenties." Many of the same writers were scrutinized by the unfailingly lucid and original mind of Edmund Wilson in his collection of reviews and essays, "The Shores of Light," and Edna St. Vincent Millay, a sort of symbol of the times, regained some of her luster with the publication of her "Letters."

Our recent past—and to some extent our immediate future—was profitably examined also in a number of significant social histories, including Frederick Lewis Allen's stimulating "The Big Change," Samuel Lubell's informative "The Future of American Politics," and Cleveland Amory's gossipy "The Last Resorts." The late Dixon Wecter's "Sam Clemens of Hannibal" told a lot about not only a great writer's youth, but our nation's.

Nineteen fifty-two was something of a season for letters, no pun meant, what with Miss Millay's revelation of her authentically gifted and heroic self, with the exchange of correspondence between George Bernard Shaw and Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the "Letters" of Hart Crane, the exchange between Paul Claudel and André Gide, and, especially, the self-portrait of Sinclair Lewis in the volume of his letters titled "From Main Street to Stockholm."

Poetry, too, shared the tendency toward interest in the past and the fact of oldsters contributing the major work. Aside from the Eliot volume, perhaps the major news of poetry lay in the volumes of Millay and Hart Crane letters, in the "Collected Poems" of Archibald MacLeish, and, paradoxically, the amazing and brilliant personal chronicle of Conrad Aiken, called "Ushant," which is surely a poem in prose.

After finding that so much of our writing and reading falls into a few patterns, it is comforting to find that diversity still persists in a large measure. The fiction best-seller list provides most of the comfort. We for one are pleased that Americans can like simultaneously, and in seemingly equal numbers, such diverse novels, in several regards, as Miss Ferber's "Giant," Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea," Steinbeck's "East of Eden," and Mrs. Keyes's "Steamboat Gothic." On the non-fiction list the number-one item is Tallulah Bankhead's autobiographical "Tallulah," a book whose world was at the farthest possible remove from its morally earnest consorts. We trust that all these books are appealing to stratified publics.

Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sinclair Lewis, Hart Crane—"a season for letters." Benjamin Thomas, Bernard DeVoto, Walter P. Webb—"interprets our past." Madison Cooper, John H. Griffin, Warren Leslie—"the surprise of the year."

AND now, we can no longer put off saying it: A major caprice of the publishing season was indisputably the behavior of Texas.

This most vocal of states gave proof that it can write as well as talk. Who are we to say so? Well, in this 1952 of absorption in the past and a general mellowness, much of the vigor of the year seemed to originate in Texas.

This was odd. For one thing, 'way back in 1942, *The Saturday Review* printed an "Inventory and Sampling" of Southwestern writing, and its leading article, by then-Texan Henry Nash Smith, asserted that Texas writers were primarily historians and folklorists, still preoccupied with the past and fairly indifferent to the present, either in Texas or, oh above all, anywhere else. At the time this was true, although a decade has done much to "date" the observation. But you might reasonably have supposed that Texans would have continued in their own special life-style, by-passed by the machine age.

For another thing, Miss Ferber, in her War of the Texas Revolution, had some very harsh things to say about a backward, uncouth, uncivilized, and rather Prussian-like "Giant."

Now, it so happens that at the very

(*Continued on page* 34)

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U.S.A. To discover what our future is apt to be like, it is often profitable to turn to the recorders of the past. For example, the baker's dozen of books we review on this and the following pages deal largely with American history, yet a good many of them throw light on the road ahead. Up to now the United States has been, by and large, a huge success story; but Walter Prescott Webb, one of the most stimulating historians alive today, has a theory that this is so because its entire existence has been in a great boom period of history, the end of which is now in sight. You won't necessarily agree with the book in which he elaborates this idea, "The Great Frontier" (reviewed below), but the chances are that you will be wiser and soberer for having tussled with it. A great many liberals profess to be discouraged by the results of the recent Presidential election. They should find solace and a greater understanding of the real nature of American liberalism in a book like Eric F. Goldman's "Rendezvous with Destiny" (page 11). And Matthew Josephson's biography "Sidney Hillman" (page 12) is excellent.

America's Lost Promise

THE GREAT FRONTIER. By Walter Prescott Webb. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 434 pp. $5.

By JOHN D. HICKS

PROFESSOR WEBB has a way of writing books around a challenging thesis. Such a book was "The Great Plains," published in 1931, in which he argued that the frontier of the treeless, semi-arid territory west of the ninety-eighth meridian required and produced a new type of American pioneering, with results quite at variance from those achieved in the eastern half of the continent. Another such book was "Divided We Stand," published in 1937. Here he emphasized the differences that marked off the United States into three sections, the North, the South, and the West, then went on to stress the fact that the South and the West, for lack of collateral, paid unceasing tribute to the East, which had it.

Now in "The Great Frontier" he presents a third hypothesis. Far from abandoning the much debated Turnerian concepts, he attempts to apply them on a global scale. Western Europe, which he chooses to call the Metropolis, takes the place of Turner's East, while the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, named collectively the Great Frontier, take the place of Turner's West. The Great Frontier, as Webb sees it, has been the tail that wagged the dog through all modern history. Its discovery, beginning with Columbus, and its exploitation from then until the early twentieth century precipitated and perpetuated the greatest boom in history. All modern times, indeed, have been boom times. "It was the constant distribution on a nominal or free basis of the royal or public domain that kept the boom going, and that gave a peculiar dynamic quality to Western civilization for four centuries."

It is a bit of a shock to think of modern history in relation to what went on before and what will come hereafter as roughly analogous to the 1920's in our own recent past. But Webb pursues his theme with relentless logic. The density of population in Western Europe, the Metropolis, he tells us, was in 1500 about 26.7 persons per square mile. To these closely-packed peoples the Great Frontier opened up "nearly 20,000,000 square miles of fabulously rich land practically devoid of population." Here lay the basis for the boom. Population flowed from the Metropolis to the Great Frontier, and both enjoyed a huge prosperity; "the abundance of the frontier was constantly being emptied into the Metropolis to increase its abundance." About the year 1930, however, the density of population for the whole great area "passed the point it registered in Europe prior to 1900." The boom was over, or as Dean Inge remarked in 1938, "The house is full."

The Industrial Revolution, which in the minds of many historians has been regarded as a principal cause of many modern developments, is relegated by Webb's hypothesis to the status of an effect. "Did it come, or flourish," Webb asks, "because men suddenly became ingenious and inventive, or because men had available so much new material that they could make their ingenuity a practical thing?" Without the "abundance of material furnished by the frontier," he doubts if it could have attained any great importance.

Webb is pretty thoroughly convinced that the Great Frontier is over, and that the world is now in for a series of changes comparable to those that overtook the United States when

—*Culver.*

"The Beginning"—"constant distribution of the royal or public domain."

John D. Hicks, professor of history at the University of California, is the author of "The Populist Revolt" and co-author of "Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939," both of which dealt with the effects of the frontier on our history.

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the American frontier wore out, only far more serious. The easy-going, uninhibited democracy that stemmed from frontier abundance will find it hard, he thinks, to survive in the new age. Individualism is already giving way to corporateness; what the individual once was supposed to be in modern life the corporation is becoming today, whether in business, or in labor, or in religion, or in education, or in almost any other aspect of human endeavor. "Capitalism of the nineteenth-century type" is likewise destined to "decline with the passing of the boom on which it was based." New institutions better suited to the new conditions are on the way in, with tendencies toward Socialism in the democracies and toward absolutism in the totalitarian states already plainly indicated. For there is little hope of new frontiers to conquer. Perhaps the Mediterranean Sea, freed from salt, can be turned into the Sahara Desert to make it blossom as the rose, or some gigantic "Point Four" program can exploit the valley of the Amazon. But these would be only small pickings. The Great Frontier is gone.

Webb knows that his thesis will be attacked. He has been through that before with "The Great Plains." Some of the criticisms he will have to face can be predicted; others will come thick and fast as the various assorted corns he has stepped on begin to ache. Webb has deliberately chosen to omit Asia and most of Africa from his calculations; it will be easy, therefore, to assert that he is operating on a semi-global rather than a global basis at a time when every part of the world is becoming extremely important to every other. Why in particular should he overlook Siberia, which shows more similarities with the American frontier than with any other area? Medievalists will assuredly point out that a Europe which could burst its bonds and surge overseas must have had something dynamic within it that the Great Frontier had not provoked or created. Modernists may perhaps contend that even if Columbus had found what he sought because there was no America in the way, there still might have been a Protestant Reformation with its emphasis on individualism, an Industrial Revolution with its consequent capitalism, and even a considerable measure of democracy. But, at any rate, all historians who enjoy the rough-house of debate assuredly owe Professor Webb a vote of thanks, for he has given them an opportunity to exert their talents to the full. Whatever one may think of his hypothesis, he must agree that only a brave man would have dared to put it in a book.

Politics of the Land

RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY. By Eric F. Goldman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 503 pp. $5.

By Samuel Lubell

SINCE the ides of last November many persons have been asking what of the future of liberalism in America. While waiting on events to shape the answer, those interested in the question would do well to spend a few hours with Eric F. Goldman's "Rendezvous with Destiny."

Mainly this is a readable, stimulating story of nearly a century of American reformers, beginning with Samuel Tilden, who could be the soul of patrician charity when approached by a ragamuffin with a drunken father, but who fired a clerk for daring to broach the question of a vacation, and ending with David Lilienthal, to whom TVA was a demonstration that "our choice need not be between extremes of 'right' and 'left,' between over-centralized big-government and a do-nothing policy, between 'private enterprise' and 'Socialism'."

A Princeton history professor, Mr. Goldman does a skilful job of weaving the many reformist agitations since the Civil War into a single continuity of evolving hope. He seems to feel that no one of the many characters he writes about labored entirely in vain. All struggled with the common problem of what was the government's proper role in a society rapidly becoming industrialized, and although none ever found a definitive answer, each contributed something on which the future built.

Professor Goldman's story becomes almost an epic of intellectual reincarnation. He shows how populism was reborn in Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism and Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom, how both of these latter movements, along with Robert LaFollette's Progressivism, found new life in the New Deal and Fair Deal.

Enlivening the narrative are countless human interest tidbits, like Thorsten Veblen's refusal to wake his children to get them to school in time, or Henry George's sending his father a copy of "Progress and Poverty" with the explanation that he had written the book to restore religious faith to the oppressed poor, or how a U.S. Senator, who was hard of hearing, started the applause that called attention to Wilson's promise to "make the world safe for democracy."

A book about so many do-gooders

—*Fabian Bachrach.*

E. F. Goldman—"evolving hope."

naturally will leave a different "message" with different readers. For this reviewer the most stimulating pages are those which trace the dilemma that liberals have got into as a result of their reliance on interpreting history as being motivated primarily by economics.

It began, one might say, with Charles Darwin. With the aid of Herbert Spencer (who was a kind of nineteenth-century Bruce Barton) the conservative thinkers seized upon Darwinism to enshrine the profit motive and the status quo as divinely ordained. Society was pictured as evolving through a competitive struggle by which the fittest survived, with those in power having proved their fitness to rule by the very act of rising to the top. Government intervention and social legislation were denounced as devilish interferences with the very laws of nature.

Against this philosophy of "conservative Darwinism," the reformers counterattacked with "reform Darwinism," arguing that since the heart of Darwin's theory was continuous evolution in relation to environment, why not legislate a better environment? To strip the status quo of moral sanctity, the reformers strove to besplatter the conservative system as little more than "brutal selfishness . . . as old as the Ice Age." Hence the importance of the economic interpretation of history as expounded by Charles A. Beard and others.

Through it the Constitution, so sa-

Samuel Lubell is the author of "The Future of American Politics."

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cred to the lords of the corporations, could be made to appear as little more than an ingenious job of profit-rigging. The First World War became nothing but a "bloody grab for profits." In fact, with the devastating aid of the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey and the theories of Sigmund Freud, all accepted values came to be debunked as mere cover-ups for particular greeds.

But when the idol-smashing was over, the liberals found themselves in an ironic plight. As a pioneer debunker, J. Allen Smith, expressed it: "The real trouble with us reformers is that we made reform a crusade against standards. Well, we smashed them all and now neither we nor anybody else have anything left."

This threat of moral nothingness cuts deeply indeed. It has been one of the gravest weaknesses in liberal thinking on the problems of war and peace. One illustration is Professor Goldman's own superficial dismissal of the League of Nations as an attempt to revive the liberalism of Grover Cleveland on a global scale. This view misinterprets not only what Wilson was striving for, but the very nature of the task of preserving peace.

How clever it seems to argue that the internationalism represented by the League of Nations was a method through which the nations on top organized to stay on top! But the same argument could be made against any policing body. The Second World War showed that the lack of an enforced international order could be more costly in lives and freedoms than almost any effective League would have entailed. The existence of law is no guarantee of justice, but can you have justice without cops?

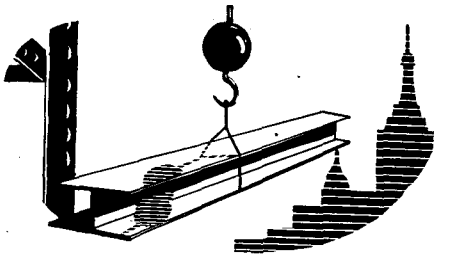
As long as there was an established order to shelter them, the liberal reformers could indulge in the pursuit of happiness through discrediting all the established gods. But the essential problems of our times—essential in the stark sense that it is the problem of survival—is plainly one of building a new social order, with the emphasis on "order." That requires not only economic bricks but moral cement. An indignant conscience may be all one needs for tearing down. The construction of a new disciplining structure requires moral faith.

"Rendezvous with Destiny" is a history and, as such, does not try to pierce the future. But like all good histories it is rich in the raw materials for thinking through the questions liberals face today in this world which yearns for the stability of a new conservatism, even while it still fears the abuses of the old conservative order.

New Tricks & an Old Pioneer

SIDNEY HILLMAN: Statesman of Labor. By Matthew Josephson, New York: Doubleday & Co. 701 pp. $5.

By Foster Rhea Dulles



IN quite a different vein from that in which he once wrote of industrial "robber barons" and scheming "politicos" of the latter part of the nineteenth century, Matthew Josephson presents in this latest of his many books a full-length portrait of a twentieth-century labor leader drawn with unconcealed sympathy and admiration. The Sidney Hillman that emerges from these crowded pages fully justifies Mr. Josephson's subtitle, "Statesman of Labor."

Hillman was a man, as his biographer clearly shows, of unusual stature and breadth of view. He was at once highly realistic in his approach to the immediate problems of unionism, wages and hours, and imbued with an idealistic vision of the world toward which all workers should aim—a world in which poverty and insecurity would be banished. His methods in pursuing both present and future objectives were in every case those of moderation and hard common sense, whether dealing with employers, rival unionists, or the Government. There were none who really knew him and his work to question his dedication to labor and his integrity.

This is not to say that Hillman was not personally ambitious, a very shrewd and sometimes opportunistic politician, and a tough fighter when the chips were down. Mr. Josephson, however, offers constant evidence that he kept his sights high and refused to compromise with principle. If his primary concern was his own union membership, and then the interests of organized labor as a whole, he sought always to promote a broader role for the workers in our modern industrial society not alone for their own sake, but as a development vitally important in strengthening American democracy.

The career of this Lithuanian-born immigrant is a new kind of American success story. Hillman neither held high political office nor achieved great riches, but he attained a position where he exercised an influence on American economic and political history dwarfing that of most politicians and captains of industry. The phrase used in attacking him during the 1944 election—President Roosevelt's word on the Vice-Presidential nomination: "Clear it with Sidney"—was in fact a sound measure of this great influence. For organized labor was in a position to impose a veto on the Vice-Presidential nomination, and Hillman was its responsible spokesman. What might be described as the alliance between Roosevelt and Hillman was for their mutual political advantage.

Mr. Josephson has told the story of Sidney Hillman with meticulous detail: his boyhood in Lithuania, early experiences as an apprentice cutter in the men's garment industry, valiant efforts to organize his fellow workers in both sweatshops and factories, effective leadership of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, important part in the formation of the CIO, promotion of labor political activity in support of the New Deal, contribution to such legislation as the NIRA and Fair Labor Standards Act, and Governmental activities with the National Defense Advisory Committee and the Office of Production Management.

Apart from the accounts of the sometimes bloody struggles of the garment workers in Chicago and New York to win recognition of their union and a decent standard of living (which have an inherent dramatic interest which Mr. Josephson develops skilfully), the highlights of this study are those chapters dealing with the upsurge of labor during the early days of the New Deal, the part played by Hillman in the strange story of John L. Lewis's resignation from the CIO, the former's role as confidential labor adviser to President Roosevelt, and the complicated maneuvering at the Democratic convention in 1944. Mr. Josephson is here at his best, and his sources have enabled him to shed new light on these phases of labor history. His book is, indeed, a good deal more than biography. Hillman played so important a role in the developments of the 1930's and 1940's that this comprehensive and authoritative record of his life is also a very interesting account of the rise of organized labor as a new focus of power in present-day America.

Foster Rhea Dulles is professor of history at the Ohio State University. His writings include "Labor in America: A History."

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The Black Hand Reaches Out

MAFIA. By Ed Reid. New York: Random House. 238 pp. $3.

By Malcolm Johnson

REPORTER Ed Reid, whose exposé of the corrupt police-bookmaker alliance in New York won a Pulitzer Prize for the *Brooklyn Eagle* in 1950, here spins a fantastic and fearful tale of a super-world government of criminals known as the Mafia, a secret society originating in Sicily and which now supposedly controls all organized crime throughout the world. This empire of crime, as the headline writers like to call it, enforces its rule by systematic murder and terrorism and has such vast wealth and power that it is represented in all formal government levels.

It is a far-fetched, lurid theory, and controversial even as a theory, rejected by many law enforcement agencies. The menace of organized crime to good government is terrifyingly real, but it is at least debatable that all organized crime can be attributed to any one organization, whether it is called the Mafia, or anything else. Consequently, conservative official crime investigators often express the opinion that the Mafia is largely mythical, although they agree that the term is used loosely to describe syndicated crime, which is real enough.

Mr. Reid concedes this skepticism on the part of law enforcement officials, but bravely adds that top crime reporters "know more about the Mafia and its threat to America than any law enforcement group in the country." That's a big order, and I doubt it, but Reid evidently subscribes wholeheartedly to the idea of this monstrous, all-powerful secret criminal society dominated by gangsters of Italian origin, and with its crime capital, as he puts it, still in Sicily. He attributes virtually every gang murder in the last fifty years to the so-called Mafia members in one way or another, and says that Mafia representatives were behind most of the U.S. Government scandals of the last few years.

Reid gives gory, documented details on a long list of murders and attributes them all to the Mafia. He obviously cannot prove Mafia responsibility, any more than the police have, but appears to accept it on belief, or faith, and he makes many other sweeping, sensational statements in the same way. Thus the book is long on sensation and necessarily short on documentation for the over-all premise.

The author says that the Mafia, whose members take a secret, blood oath, enforces a code of silence. He writes: "The Mafia and its worldwide criminal organization live and die by this code. Under it has grown up and flourished a super-government of crime that is more powerful than any formally constituted government on earth, because it is immortal. A treasury of billions is at the disposal of members of the inner council of the Mafia, men who have come up through the ranks of crime. The high priests of the Mafia are, without exception, Sicilian or of Sicilian origin. Every continent on earth has a governing board of Mafia members who rule all organized criminals, listen to their arguments and dispense justice, which may take the form of a grant of money or a sentence of death. The power of the Mafia is not entirely in its wealth but in its ability to kill anyone, anywhere, at any time.

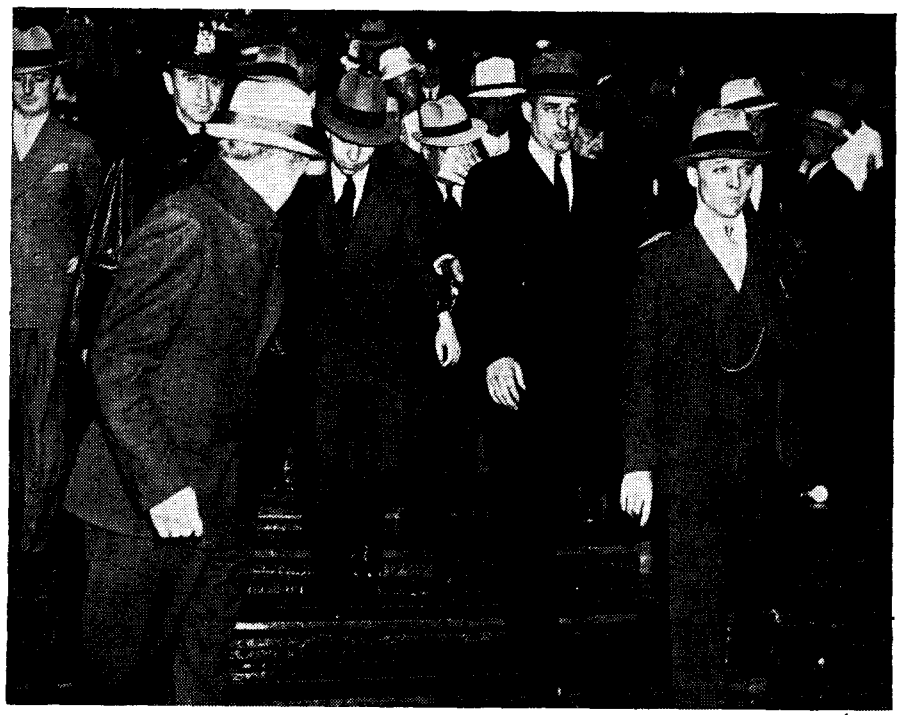
"The ability of the Mafia to push the button marked 'vendetta' and kill a man anywhere on earth has been demonstrated in this country many times."

After attempting to trace the origin of the Mafia to medieval Sicily, Reid lists eighty-three names as representing the "Phi Beta Kappa," the top members of the Mafia in the United States. The list is headed by Vito Genovese, a criminal now living in luxury in New Jersey, and includes such now familiar figures as Frank Costello, Joe Adonis, and other luminaries of the Kefauver Senate Crime Investigating Committee hearings. Reid identifies Genovese, who has miraculously escaped murder conviction, as the absolute boss of the Mafia in this country, whereas the more publicized Costello does not even make the grade as a member of the "Grand Council," which Genovese supposedly heads.

Perhaps the most startling and certainly the best documented part of this book is the detailed disclosure of Genovese's activity as a trusted aide in the Allied Military Government in Italy during the latter part of the war, while he was a fugitive from the United States on a murder indictment.

Testimony appended to the book shows that Genovese was warmly recommended as a sterling character by American officers in the AMG and that he received these recommendations, in writing, while he was conducting huge black market operations in American supplies.

Moreover, the testimony shows that the AMG was strangely reluctant to release Genovese for return to the United States to face trial for murder. In fact, the return of this criminal was delayed in Italy until after the last key witness against him on the murder charge had died mysteriously in



—Acme.

Charles (Lucky) Luciano on his way to Sing Sing—"behind . . . Government scandals(?)"

Malcolm Johnson is a staff member of the International News Service and author of "Crime on the Water Front."

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a prison cell in Brooklyn. The implication, of course, is that the prisoner was murdered, making it safe for Genovese to be returned. He was acquitted, of course.

"Mafia" may be a blend of fact, fancy, and speculation, but the author has turned up some interesting research. I believe he has gone overboard, but in fairness to him it must be said that the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and the Kefauver Crime Committee are among the agencies which set considerable store in the theory of the Mafia as a world power in crime.

U. S. A. Notes

THE PUNCH IS GONE: There is no doubt that the late President Roosevelt was The Champ. Anyone who has watched the ragged, earnest performance of General Eisenhower or the polished academic approach of Governor Stevenson will not for a moment put them in the same class with FDR. Roosevelt really loved to campaign. He could lift an audience or cast it down. He not only had a magnificent voice and knew how to use it, he was a first-rate actor and the most expert of public relations men. That he was far and away the top in his field four successful campaigns for President show. But what made him The Champ? Could he, who defeated Herbert Hoover so successfully in 1932, have done it in 1928, when he barely was elected Governor of the State of New York while Al Smith took a beating on the national ticket? Or was it because Roosevelt plus the Depression, the anxiety, the forthcoming war, Pearl Harbor, and then victory in the offing were combined?

Harold F. Gosnell, adjunct professor of political science at the American University, Washington, D. C., obviously, from his book entitled **"Champion Campaigner"** (Macmillan, $3.50) is a devout admirer of the four-time winner. Though he has written nine books relating to politics and has held various jobs at Washington during the Roosevelt regime, he adds little to the knowledge of the reasons for the success of the Democratic leader. Yet, for those who have read little of Roosevelt and for those who would like an interesting, short, readable book with all his election victories in one place, Dr. Gosnell's book is recommended.

—L. L. L. GOLDEN.

COLONIAL TYCOONS: James P. Hedges in **"The Browns of Providence Plantations: Colonial Years"** (Harvard University Press, $6) begins the first of a projected three-volume study of one of the earliest important American mercantile and industrial enterprises. Like W. T. Baxter's "The House of Hancock," it is a valuable case study of an important family, but it also reveals a great deal about colonial economy in general—the Caribbean trade and evasion of imperial restrictions, traffic in slaves, the money shortage, manufacture of spermaceti candles, and the iron industry. From the rich detail of the family papers Mr. Hedges documents the fact of economic interdependence of the colonies, "a preliminary to intercolonial action in the political realm." The Revolution upset the Browns' well-integrated business system, and, in the interest of "the Publick Good & a Small Commission," they tried to procure and manufacture military supplies and at the same time to establish new lines of trade with France. The French trade was disillusioning, and when the war ended "they, and other American merchants, hastened to beat a path back to London." The attempt to restore the economic *status quo ante bellum* failed. By the end of 1784 Brown and Benson owed the English house of Champion and Dickason a balance of £26,144 sterling, a debt that was not liquidated until ten years later. Meantime, the family turned to new fields of investment, trade, and manufacture, which the author intends to describe in his next volume. —J. MERTON ENGLAND.

VOTERS' VAGARIES: Who elects whom? Does the Presidential candidate help elect the Congressmen? Or does the party carry more weight with the voter than either, and in what proportion?

Malcolm Moos, professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University, has probed into the mysteries of voter behavior and presents his findings in **"Politics, Presidents, and Coattails"** (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, $4.50). Instead of a dull book, jammed only with tables and charts, and valuable only to the student of voter trends, Mr. Moos has given us an amusing story of what happens and how it happens, and traces lines of voter action.

His study of the 1948 election, when what was supposed to be in the bag for Governor Dewey turned out to be in the pocket of President Truman, and the system Congressman Javits in New York City operates are alone worth having the book for.

This analysis of Congressional elec-

(*Continued on page 32*)

Your Literary I.Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

NUTS TO YOU

Judith L. Dohm of Olympia, Washington, offers capsule descriptions of ten characters in various kinds of literary works whose symptoms, real or feigned, would qualify them nowadays for the psychoanalyst's couch. Allowing five points for identification of each character, and five more for naming the work of the author concerned, a score of sixty is indifferent good, seventy cause for self-satisfaction, and eighty cause for greater self-satisfaction. Answers on page 31.

1. Upon marrying an ex-baronet who had lost a family curse along with the title, this demented female turned into a model of prim respectability.
2. These unfortunate brothers were driven mad by the same mysterious fumes that killed their sister.
3. This eccentric tradesman entertained a fellow guest by trying to submerge him, with the help of his host, in one of the containers on the table.
4. When his entire way of life was shattered by war and desolation, this plantation-owner retreated into a shadowy dream-world of his own.
5. This sea-faring monomaniac devoted his life to the pursuit of his albino enemy.
6. Before she died this hapless maiden, with her reason undermined by the machinations of her lover's diabolical mentor, relived in fantasy the innocent happiness of her early courtship.
7. This crazed recluse, who believed himself an archangel, tried to murder the son of the man who, he said, had prevented him from becoming Pope.
8. This noble warrior, inflamed by unrequited love, ran amok and rushed naked through the countryside, annihilating everything in his way.
9. This stern Victorian was so warped by his embittered notions of morality that he turned his sons into weaklings and attempted to blight his daughters' chances of love and happiness.
10. The twisted reasoning of this vindictive fanatic led him to seal up his supposed enemy in an underground vault.

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Fiction. Although he does not say so in so many words, Lon Tinkle in his review of the past year's literary output, "Year of the Long Autumn" (page 7), gives the distinct impression that 1952 will not long be remembered for the fiction to which it gave birth. In this respect the year resembles the four or five immediately preceding it. Indeed, many critics have seriously suggested that the novel may be about spent as a literary form. Yet there can be no doubt that the novel is more popular with the reading public than ever. During the past year Americans have bought well over a quarter-billion books in paper bindings at prices ranging from 25¢ to 50¢, by far the majority of them novels, the quality varying from trash to classics. In this connection, two books we review this week are of special interest, for they are the latest examples of a significant experiment in offering new fiction simultaneously in hard and paper covers. Stanley Baron's "All My Enemies" (page 16) is a well-written thriller in paper.

Gentle Mixtures in Gentle Seas

THE WITCH'S THORN. By Ruth Park. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 209 pp. Clothbound, $1.50. New York: Ballantine Books. 209 pp. Paperbound, 35¢.

By Charles Lee

OFFHAND, one might reasonably suppose that a novel about the life of an illegitimate child in a small New Zealand town during the Twenties would not hold much appeal for American readers. But the localisms of Miss Park's extraordinary novel are of place and custom; its passions are of the world. The town of Te Kano is faraway and picturesque, but its emotions are as intimate and real as one's own heartbeat.

The story belongs centrally to little Bethell Jury, whose fun-loving mother Queenie burns herself out and into an early grave. For Bethell this is but the beginning of an odyssey of grief as she wanders, bewildered and often brutalized, from one temporary home to another.

Her "respectable" Aunt Amy, who proves more susceptible to hysterics than to charity, is the first stop. Afterwards Bethell moves in with her German uncle, Mr. Wedesweiler, Te Kano's Mayor, who offers her up as a sacrifice to his own selfishly perverted notions of love. She then finds refuge with her "bad" Aunt Gracie, who has raised eleven variously sired children in a home of robust allegiances; but just as she had made a place for herself in this vigorous (and reformed) household she is literally dragged from it by her tragically sadistic father Johnny Gow. How she is finally saved by her Maori friend, fat old Georgie Wi, makes for a climax as satisfying as it is noble and ironic.

But though Bethell is the central interest of these melodramatic developments, there are many additional characters to touch the heart and tickle the ribs. Miss Park has a genius that is Dickensian for the crowded canvas, the eccentric detail, the adroit tethering of humor and tears. She makes you laugh almost as often as she lashes you to anger or overpowers you with pathos.

Aunt Amy's pimply son Jellicoe is memorable; so is her grocer husband Mr. Minogue, not only in regard to his expertly reproduced brogue but also for his hilariously painful serenading of Mr. Kevin O'Reilly Cough, the has-been "Thrush of Erin" who has been reduced to playing the Pacific provinces. Georgie's ancient Uncle Pihopa, a sheet-wrapped ex-cannibal who has the local distinction of once having fed upon a bishop, likes to show the tattooing on his left buttock to visitors debarking from the train at Te Kano's little station. Other memorable moments are provided by Johnny Gow at Queenie's funeral, by Hoot Gibson Wi in his battle with the great eel, and by the wise old priest of the community, Father Finn.

"The Witch's Thorn" deals with races but is addressed to man; it parades before him the consequences of a great variety of spites, cruelties, and despairs, and it offers to him the challenge of spirit and love. It ought further to be noted that Miss Park writes a prose remarkable for its live and lyric qualities; she makes the language sing.

In short, hers is one of the best novels of the year.

BEHIND THE BOOK:

Ruth Park's first two novels—"Harp in the South" and "12½ Plymouth Street" — though warmly received by the critics, did something less than wonderful as sellers. This led to recent reports around New York that Houghton Mifflin Company, her publishers, would not have given the green light to "The Witch's Thorn" if a new firm, Ballantine Books, had not come into the picture. Stories to that effect, however, were firmly denied the other day by Paul Brooks, editor-in-chief of the Boston house. "No truth to them," he said. "Absolutely." In any case, Houghton Mifflin and Ballantine, demonstrating their combined faith in Miss Park, have printed 6,300 copies of "The Witch's Thorn" in hard covers, and 175,000 in paperbacks. First reports on the reviews and sales of the book are very good, a reason for the atmosphere of confidence circulating these days in the cavernous offices of Ballantine Books, New York. From approximately 100,000 paperback outlets from coast to coast, reports of brisk sales on the first four Ballantines are filtering in to the firm's president, Ian Ballantine. What he does is offer publishers a service enabling them to publish original books simultaneously —a clothbound edition at regular prices and a paperbound one at 35 cents. (Thus far Houghton Mifflin and Farrar, Straus & Young are the only two which have signed up.) Of the initial entries, the runaway best seller is "Executive Suite." Its first paperback printing aggregated 175,000; another 100,000 was promptly added. Hardcover sales so far: 9,500 in two editions and a third just ordered. As for the sales impact of paperback editions on hardcover editions and vice versa, the consensus is: "It's too soon to tell." At the moment both Ballantine and Houghton Mifflin are pretty excited about Ruth Park. "The Witch's Thorn," Mr. Ballantine, a friendly, articulate fellow, said the other day, "belongs on anybody's list of the ten best artistic achievements of the year. You might say it's a crucial book for us, something of a challenge to the taste of bookbuyers." Ballantine jackets aren't of the standard, or plunging neckline, variety. Nonetheless, they are getting an even break on the racks. Only some trade booksellers—"relatively few" — have refused to stock Ballantine editions to begin with. —Bernard Kalb.

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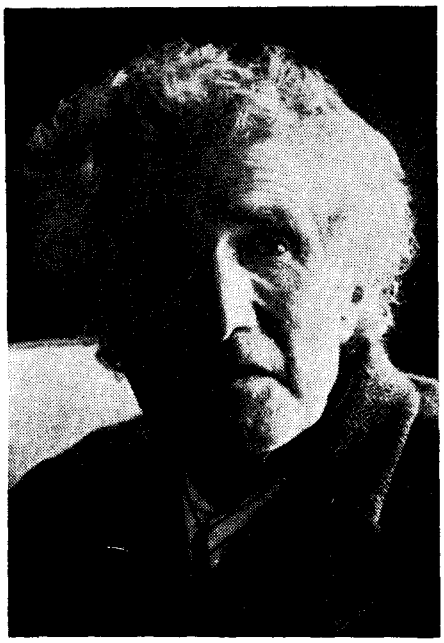

J. C. Powys—"confronted timidity."

Outsiders Inside

THE INMATES. By John Cowper Powys. New York: Philosophical Library. 318 *pp.* $4.50.

By Harrison Smith

IN HIS eightieth year John Cowper Powys has produced an astonishing and fascinating novel; it is difficult to decide whether it is his final comic jest at humanity, or a deliberately fantastic interpretation of his philosophy of life, which has always been colored by imaginative fears and superstition. Essayist, critic, teacher, and novelist, he has confronted the timidity of two generations of reviewers who have hesitated to apply to him the word genius, and have settled on phrases and synonyms. "He belongs," wrote one critic, "to the universal nation of art," whatever that may mean; another said that "all of his characters seemed to have escaped from 'Wuthering Heights'."

Powys has written "The Inmates" with an awareness of the despair and confusion of the contemporary world. His scene is limited to a lunatic asylum for those of the privileged classes whose peculiarities and strange manias prevent them from living in the sane world in which organized society has, in the course of less than a half-century slaughtered and enslaved millions of human beings.

The learned doctor and psychiatrist who runs the madhouse called Glim specializes in dissecting and torturing dogs, hoping to discover, like Pavlov, the secrets of canine souls. The attendants, living and laboring in its extensive grounds, are mostly elderly, and certainly half mad, as if they had been infected either with the unreason of the patients or the savagery of the outer world.

The fact is that Glim is a refuge rather than a prison, a place where oversensitive men and women with uncomfortable attitudes and strange philosophies and patterns of behavior can live at peace with each other. The major character is a sensitive, highly intelligent, and poor young man who had been the ward and secretary of a distinguished British diplomat who was about to marry a beautiful American girl. It was simpler to commit John Hush to Glim for life than have him around. He had a passion for young women; he liked to embrace them tenderly, and especially to snip off a small lock of hair. Otherwise he was harmless, and as he argued, the ecstasy he felt in surveying virgins was not maniacal since it was universally used by nature for the propagation of the race. Also, the threads of hair he treasured would not be missed. He fell in love on his first day in Glim with a slight and lovely girl who had, to be sure, killed her old and complacent stepfather for a good reason, but Teena might never misbehave in that manner again.

Both of them knew that the madness that had lodged them and all the other inmates in an asylum was not evil. One of them loved to dance violently and had accidentally danced his aged stepfather to death. He would doubtless never do that again, either. Another was a naval commander who had the annoying habit of waylaying and arguing with members of Parliament to demand of them a more philosophic approach to public and international affairs. He was committed to Glim as a public nuisance. Still another had so keen a sense of smell that he had to drench his clothing with so powerful a counterirritant that no one could endure his presence.

None of these abnormal inmates was as dangerous as the presumably sane people outside, though most of them talked too disturbingly for normal human beings to endure. None of them behaved as the inmates of asylums are expected to behave. They were not freaks or gibbering maniacs, nor irrevocably sealed to silence. When the local Catholic priest came to argue with them, John Hush had no doubt that he made less sense than the majority of his own philosophic and maniacal friends. He knew that one of the keepers was a dangerous sadist and that the good doctor who ruled Glim was in many ways madder than most of his guests, and that he loved to kill dogs. At the end the novel reaches a wonderful and lively climax. The inmates were foolish enough to try to escape from the only place in the world where they could be secure and at peace with humanity. John and his lovely Teena, who still dreamed of a mate who was barely human, find safety in a traveling circus and both have what they yearned for, the girl an inanimate lover and John an occasional tiny lock of hair. Compared with the demands of the conquerors and ravishers of mankind from Alexander to Genghis Khan and Hitler, John thought it was not too much to ask.

Fiction Notes

WHAT HAPPENED TO ROGER?: The best thing that ever happened to Roger Lawford, according to his history as recorded in Warren Leslie's **"The Best Thing That Ever Happened"** (McGraw-Hill, $3.50), was his desertion from training camp during the latter part of the war. Since his camp was somewhere in the deep South, his escape took him through a desolate backwoods section where his life was in double jeopardy: from the natives who looked with malignant disfavor upon a white army deserter, as well as from the army, which had at least a court-martial in store for him. Why did he quit camp? We range back and forth in time throughout this novel in search of the essentials of his past, while Roger himself moves ahead through a thorny set of adventures in search, as the saying is, of himself.

It is a nice problem Mr. Leslie has posed, and his book would have been a very good one had he done something important with the solution. I don't think he has, and the reason for his failure is plain to see. To put it fancifully, he has tried to light his scene with fireworks, where a steadier illumination was needed. The problem of Roger Lawford is one in depth; it calls for moral and psychological probing. Mr. Leslie, perhaps fearful for our attention span, aims boldly for our viscera as though he were Mickey Spillane. The first thing we have is a struggle to the death with two Negroes in a deserted road. Roger kills them both—and now his problem has lost its initial outlines. The last thing is another terrible fight, in which Roger is killed.

—Nathan Rothman.

SPIES AT WORK: Like the game of chess, the novel of "intrigue" has a limited number of openings. One of these

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conventional gambits involves the spiriting of a noted scientist either to or from an unfriendly power. This familiar situation provides the framework for **"All My Enemies"** (Ballantine Books, clothbound $1.50, paperbound 35¢), Stanley Baron's second venture into the Graham Greene-Eric Ambler territory.

To say that the situation is familiar is not to deprecate it. Part of the delight that an aficionado finds in this particular genre lies in recognizing familiar landmarks: the sleazy rooming house in which the spy hangs his hat, the dummy business that acts as a front for espionage, the assortment of everyday characters who are not what they seem. The excellence of the contemporary spy story is largely determined by the amount of authenticity with which the writer is able to charge his atmosphere and his characters. On this score Mr. Baron comes off well.

Actually, though its theme is an old favorite, a sense of immediacy is given to Mr. Baron's book because there *has* been considerable traffic in noted foreign scientists in recent years, with disturbing consequences. Mr. Baron's savant is an elderly ex-German specialist in biological warfare. He is prevented from working at his trade in the United States because of some Communist associations he had formed, but only dimly understood, in the Germany of the Weimar Republic. The Russians try to capitalize on his predicament by sending an agent to recruit the old man for their own employ. The substance of the story concerns the character of the foreign agent and the changes brought in it by a chance romantic liaison he forms outside the line of duty.

Hugo Schneider, the foreign emissary, is a hard-shell Communist whose perspective was congealed in Germany in the Twenties. A love affair which at first seems to have only transient importance causes him to question the values by which he lives. But he has gone too far to do more than question the pattern of his ambivalent existence; he is unable to change it in time to avert catastrophe.

There are a couple of bones that one can pick with the author of "All My Enemies." He uses a haphazard act of violence to bring the action to a close. And he leaves too many ends needlessly unraveled. These are noticeable faults because the novel is so well constructed generally that it deserves a more adequate denouement. —MARTIN LEVIN.

GOLD MINE: Harold U. Ribalow, an anthologist with a genuine and exciting flair for the business, has reworked

(*Continued on page 30*)

Poetry. A pleasant publishing tradition appears to be in the making. In the autumn of 1949 Robert Frost's publishers issued an edition of his complete poems; in 1951 all of Carl Sandburg's verse was packaged in time for Christmas giving; last year what was perhaps the "best" of W. B. Yeats's verse was offered in a volume of "Collected Poems." The custom is doubly useful; it makes the work of our major poets available in compass small enough to find a home on the average reader's library shelf, and it provides an excuse for critics, professional and amateur, to evaluate the writers' contributions to our literature. A collection of the verse of Archibald MacLeish—which does not include all his best work—has been issued and is reviewed on page 18. All the verse, as well as all the plays of the Anglo-American Nobel Prize winner T. S. Eliot are available in the new volume which Mary M. Colum reviews below.

St. Louis Over Bloomsbury

THE COMPLETE POEMS AND PLAYS. By T. S. Eliot. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 392 pp. $6.

By MARY M. COLUM

"WE are country-bred people," says the Hon. Charles Piper, brother of the deceased Lord Monchesney, in T. S. Eliot's "Family Reunion." This single sentence tells a great deal as to the difference between Americans and English, between Americans and Europeans. One of the great American dreams is to be an urban person with city clothes, city manners, city habits. One of the great English dreams was to be a country gentleman, owning a country house of some kind, with horses, dogs, and guns. This type never minded being called provincial because, as a matter of fact, they were a rural people, but beyond a certain economic line they all wanted to talk with a standard class accent.

—*Kay Bell.*

Eliot—"always a character-creator."

Now, T. S. Eliot loves the English country-house dwellers, and many of his critics, as those of Henry James, complain that he has too much of a penchant for titles and people of historic descent. But in old countries these titles are interesting and romantic, evoking part of the country's history, and their possessors are frequently people who understand the arts; in England, the art of literature particularly. In his remarkable plays Eliot has undoubtedly made these people oversubtle, but he has certainly made them characters.

He was always, from his early poems, a character-creator—Sweeney, J. Alfred Prufrock, the title character in "Portrait of a Lady," Burbank with his Baedeker. To be sure, his characters are all neurotics and neurotics in the American way. He possesses the American sophistication, the sophistication of cities. Writers like Eliot and James came into old European cultures with a new type of intelligence, one that had developed out of a struggle to tame a continent and which resulted in an overrespect for social formulas and conventions.

In the writing of his plays, Eliot's American intelligence was able to get him away from the English obsession about keeping to Elizabethan verse forms. He got back to the verse of the mystery and morality plays in his

Mary M. Colum, lecturer on English literature at Columbia University, is the author of "From These Roots" and "Life and the Dream."

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striking "Murder in the Cathedral," and so made a fresh start in verse drama. Then, he put himself closer to Racine than to Shakespeare in "Family Reunion" and "The Cocktail Party," for these are dramas of conscience as Racine conceived them, nearer to "Phèdre" and "Britannicus" than to "Macbeth" or "Hamlet." He knit French and Anglo-Saxon culture. The shape his early poetry took came out of Jules Laforgue, though let me stress here my conviction that he is a far greater poet than Laforgue.

In spite of his love for England and the English tradition, his writing is markedly un-English. The inner rhythm of his mind, which is what gives any real writer his style, is something altogether distinct from that possessed by any English poet; it is a nervous rhythm, short in its emotional undertones, but capable of taking in diverse influences. Of his poetry, the present reviewer believes that his earliest is his best, the most distinctive and with the most personal style. At the same time it is citified poetry to an extent that no European poetry has been, no matter how much European poets try to make it so. No European could, or ever did, write a poem like "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" or "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." These two, it seems to the reviewer, are far finer poems than the much advertised "Waste Land," which, in spite of memorable passages, is not so completely achieved. What lovely lines are in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock":

> We have lingered in the chambers of the sea,
> By sea girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown,
> Till human voices wake us and we drown.

and in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales":

> The nightingales are singing near
> The Convent of the Sacred Heart.
>
> And sang within the bloody wood
> When Agamemnon cried aloud,
> And let their liquid sifting fall
> To stain the stiff dishonored shroud.

But going through the collection before us, we cannot help feeling that these poems and plays, with all their discoveries and all their great accomplishment, are limited in their emotional range. The language of his plays becomes a cautious speech which never can belong to the great projections of the theatre. His characters can never rise to the rhetoric of the great poetic dramatists. Eliot could not write, and none of his personages could ever speak, lines like

> A wild dedication of yourselves
> To unpath'd waters and undreamed-of shores

or Yeats's

> The hand that loves to scatter, the life like the gambler's throw.
> And these things I make prosper till a day comes that I know,
> When heart and mind shall darken that the weak pull down the strong,
> And the long remembering harpers have matter for a song.

But when everything else is said, it must be said that T. S. Eliot is one of the great poets of the modern world and he truly deserved the Nobel Prize. He has been able to put modern man with his anxieties, hestitations, and trivialities into his poetry. He has been one of those poets with a deep and perhaps almost unconscious urge to link himself with something outside his private interests. He wanted a link with English Anglicanism and the old English tradition. Yeats wanted to link himself with the Irish tradition and nationalism. The poetry of both poets benefited by their enlistment.

"... All Gone..."

By Walter de la Mare

"AGE takes in pitiless hands
All that one loves away—
Peace, joy, simplicity
Only through childhood stay":
Or so, at least, they say.

"Ravishment of the light,
And gradual break of day;
Dreams, brought by sleep, to night—
Age takes them all away":
Ay, that is what they say.

"The marvel of the snow,
Magic of wandering moon,
The starry hosts of heaven—
Come seventy, all are gone.

"Unhappy when alone,
Nowhere at peace to be;
Drowned the old self-sown eager thoughts
Constantly stirring in thee."—

Extraordinary!
That's what they say to me!

A Peacemaker

COLLECTED POEMS 1917-1952. By Archibald MacLeish. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 386 pp. $4.

By I. L. Salomon

THERE is no distinguished poet today who has been more influenced by the insufferable yet necessary literary movements in his lifetime than the former Librarian of Congress, Archibald MacLeish. His "Collected Poems" is an extraordinary compilation. An expatriate in the Twenties, and later preoccupied with the study of primitive civilizations, Mr. MacLeish returned to this country to affirm his faith in its future and to become the chief intellectual spokesman for American culture during the New Deal. In conflict with the Philistines of the age, he saluted the social muse while avoiding in most of his poetry the spurious arena of polemics. Indebted to Eliot and Pound for a mannered idiom, he never yielded his ideas to their authoritarian complex. His newest lyrics are achievements that only a sensitive imagination could create. These, the earlier lyrics, and the superb narrative poems give convincing testimony that he has realized his potentialities as a mature artist.

Mr. MacLeish in his "Collected Poems" is what Pound said of Browning, an Old Hippety-Hop o' the accents. The masculinity of his lines, the magnificent rhythms of his blank verse, his terza rima adaptations, his technical accomplishment in many verse forms, and his perfection in the use of the simplest iambics are paradigms of excellence. His power derives from a long apprenticeship and a sedulous discipline in experimentation. If the thumbprints of writers as diverse as Rimbaud and Whitman, to name two of many, also intrude in places, if a subconscious desire not to be himself persists in his verse-making, he still is no slavey of incompetence. Specifically, "L'An Trentiesme de Mon Eage" comes by way of Pound's "Mauberley" accompanied by the characteristic word-play and tonality of Eliot, yet it stands on its own as a fine poem typical of First World War disillusionment. Again, "Colloquy for the State," a choral-verse in colloquialisms, approximates the jaunty conversational selections in Sandburg's "The People, Yes." Its phrasing or jargon in statement, interjectory query, and response is good earthy American speech.

A man of ideas and a man of feeling, Mr. MacLeish possesses above most of his contemporaries in the

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craft an incisive knowledge of men living in his time and before him. In his brilliant psychological study, "The Hamlet of A. MacLeish," he probes himself as poet and man, and at odds with the materialism of the world, he makes poetic order out of the chaos within him. In "Conquistador," the Pulitzer Prize poem for 1932, he chronicles the conquest of Mexico in an epic of nearly great proportion. In the strong beat of its terza rima stanzas there is a solidity of texture that alternates felicitously with a lyrical assonance few modern poets have been able to master. Lines like "Time done is dark as are sleep's thickets" and "I: poor as I am: I was young in that country" give a quickening sense of immediacy. Mr. MacLeish, an old romantic given to nostalgia, can be spare, clear, lean as any classicist.

If "The Hamlet" is personal and "Conquistador" historical, the sensibilities of a generation's thinking appear in "America Was Promises." This, the "Frescoes," and portions of "Public Speech" make a unity.

It is in his personal idiom as a lyrist that Mr. MacLeish will endure. He has already given stature to many anthologies by such poems as "You, Andrew Marvell," a model of classic design, the "Ars Poetica," an imagist poem with a credo not completely adhered to, "The End of the World," a statement of finalities by a modern, and in "Invocation to the Social Muse," an admirable resolution in poetry of the frenzy of the era. He has written other lyrics not so well known in his "New Poems" and in three of his significant volumes, "Streets of the Moon" (1928), "New Found Land" (1930), and "Actfive" (1948). These are sufficient to insure his permanence beyond our time, for they have in common with his New England poems and his lyrics of friendship the right touch of authenticity.

In "Not Marble nor the Gilded Monuments," he invests his love theme with delicate tenderness, but begins with the unexpected

> The praisers of women in their proud and beautiful poems
> Naming the grave mouth and the hair and the eyes
> Boasted those they loved should be forever remembered
> These were lies

In "Jesuitical Advice to a Senator," he displays an irony in parallel antithesis as he adjures the gentleman to

> Make truth a lie
> and truth will not be by
> for men to find
> with freedom of the mind:
> When freedom of the mind
> is free to find
> no truth but only lie
> Freedom will die

The "Collected Poems" of Archibald MacLeish is a major work, even if it does not include his most exciting radio play, "The Fall of the City." It is a major work despite the appearance of poems that have a biographical literary interest and monologues of no great moment. Certainly it is a strong contender for the major poetry awards this year, and every intelligent reader will heed Mr. MacLeish's sentiments:

> I speak to those of my own time
> To none other
> . . . . . .
> O living men Remember me Receive me among you.

"I hope you'll capture the spirit of the book . . . er, has anyone read the book?"

Other Men, Other Music

A LITTLE TREASURY OF WORLD POETRY. Edited with an Introduction by Hubert Creekmore. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 904 pp. $5.

By Louis Untermeyer

IN 1928 there appeared a book of such size and scope that it seemed unlikely to be matched and impossible to surpass. Entitled "An Anthology of World Poetry," edited by Mark Van Doren on a scale not hitherto attempted, its contents revealed an authority as well as a range which established it as the outstanding and definitive work of its kind. Historians have maintained that cultural taste changes no less than four times a century and, since it is just twenty-five years since Van Doren's collection first impressed enthusiastic readers, it may be time for a reappraisal of the world's poetic riches and a comparison of the older and more recent translators.

Hubert Creekmore's "A Little Treasury of World Poetry" attempts to do both. The proportions of the two books differ drastically; the divisions are sharper; there are many new names among the translating poets. The chief difference is that, for rather specious (or perhaps merely special) reasons, Mr. Creekmore has decided to omit all American and English (but not Irish and Welsh) poetry from his collection, as indicated by his subtitle, "Translations from the Great Poets of Other Languages." This obviously limits a definition of world poetry, and since his volume runs to 872 smallish pages (without the indexes) as against Van Doren's 1,274 large pages, it cannot take the place of its forerunner.

There are, nevertheless, several notable features which distinguish the new compilation. Mr. Creekmore's introduction is one such feature. It is an unusually winning prologue, explanatory without being apologetic, erudite but not academic. Moreover, it summarizes freshly the confusing and often contradictory problems of translation. Every translator is faced with two choices: either to render (or attempt to bring over) the strict meaning, the pure content, of a poem at the expense of the music, or to sacrifice the music for the sake of the meaning. A compromise is sometimes possible, but it is usually the latter process which the translator is compelled to adopt. How, for example, is one to carry over into English the delicate syllables of Heine's "Leise zieht durch mein Gemüt lieb-

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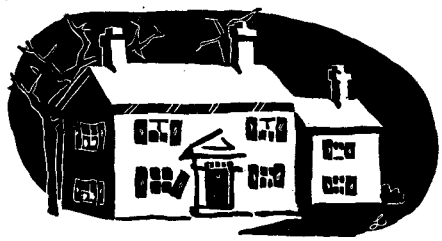
liche Geläute?" Unless the translator can preserve all those sliding, alliterative g's and l's, as well as the swift internal rhyme, he is reduced to a statement of the flat sentimentality that the lovely sound of bells is softly drawing through the poet's heart. To achieve anything like the tonal equivalent of the original, the translator must write a new poem, one which is at best a substitute for the resonant vowels, the contrapuntal consonants, and the intricate nuances of rhyme and repetition—in short, he must (to paraphrase Alice's perversion of the proverb) take care of the sense and let the sounds take care of themselves. Mr. Creekmore uses another analogy when he declares cogently: "They [the translators] could not possibly—nor could anyone—bring over into English all of a foreign poem, as one may import all of a foreign painting. We must be satisfied with black-and-white photographs; at best we can hope only for color reproductions."

Within these limitations, Mr. Creekmore has made admirable choices. As might have been expected, he is most successful with the narratives, descriptions, meditations, ironies—those with the greatest amount of "prose content"—and least felicitous when he comes to the pure lyric in which the original words are charged with musical overtones, verbal ambiguities, and implications beyond the mere meaning. Although his book is sharply limited in size, the editor has given more space to certain key poems than his pioneering precursor. For instance, Babette



Deutsch's vivid version of Alexander Blok's compact and epical "The Twelve" is reprinted in its entirety rather than (as in Van Doren) a few disjointed segments. On the other hand, where Van Doren gives the complete "Song of Songs," "The Rubaiyat," and other important long poems, Creekmore offers only snippets. The smaller format also forces Creekmore to omit representative poets of various literatures, such as the Russian Bunin, Nikitin, Sologub; the French Vidal, Musset, Spire (the first memorably translated by Ezra Pound, the last by Stanley Burnshaw); the German Uhland, Liliencron, Möricke (inspirer of Hugo Wolf's most sensitive songs), Ernst Toller, whose "Schwalbenbuch" is a poignant experience, Otto Julius Bierbaum, Walter Hasenclever, etc. And, although it may seem an ungracious quibble, lovers of Horace may well ask why there is not even one of the brilliant Horatian versions by Austin Dobson, Eugene and Roswell Martin Field, Franklin P. Adams, and George F. Whicher.

On the other hand, Whicher appears in two lively medieval Latin lyrics, and the best of the recent crop of translators is represented by some of Dudley Fitts's multiple renderings from the Greek, as well as his paraphrases of the modern Jorge Andrade and Efrain Huerta; Robert Fitzgerald's translations from Villon and Virgil; Stephen Spender's fine approximations of Eluard and Lorca; J. B. Leishman's sensitive evocations of Rilke; Kenneth Rexroth's silhouettes from the Japanese; Horace Gregory's and Jack Lindsay's versions of Catullus; Witter Bynner's transliterations from the Chinese; Vladimir Nabokov's rhymed counterparts of poems by Tyutchev and Lermontov. These, and other modern efforts to express one culture in terms of another, make this book a kind of condensed sequel, supplementing though not supplanting its eminent predecessor.

FRASER YOUNG LITERARY CRYPT No. 497

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 497 will be found in the next issue.

ALTER TO ORDESH

ERDTMPGR: TG BTDD

ADRPOR TGORDC BTGK XRLF

HRPW PEXPWGPNRO.

OPHQRD VSKWOSW

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 496

Opinion has caused more trouble on this earth than plagues or earthquakes. —VOLTAIRE.

Poetry Notes

MORE IMAGINATION THAN WHIMSY: It is difficult to pin down the quality of David McCord's latest book of "rhymes," **"Far and Few"** (Little, Brown, $2.50). It is probably better not to try since, if the effort would not exactly be to "break a butterfly upon a wheel," it would involve handling such other natural creatures as "Five Little Bats," "The Newt," "The Grasshopper," "The Starfish," and "Our Mr. Toad" in an equally inappropriate way.

From the format, which appears to be that of a children's book, decorated with effective pictorial line drawings by an artist with a taste for the whimsical in nature, it might be supposed that "Far and Few" is a collection of verses for children. But these "Rhymes of the Never Was and Always Is" are more on the side of imagination than whimsy ("the Never Was and Always Is" could be a good definition of the imagination), and Mr. McCord himself, in a dust-wrapper note, points out that his work is primarily *of* children: "If they are *of*, then they will certainly be *for*."

He goes on to say that "the verses in this book reflect a child's self-reliance, his instinctive interest in nature, and the heritage of the young respecting rhythm and secondary color of familiar words." The reflections appear to be accurate, and the mirror of Mr. McCord's mind glitters with wit as well as charm. Not seldom, this is not merely child's play, as for example, in "Cocoon", a short "rhyme" which I quote in its extensive entirety:

> The little caterpillar creeps
> Awhile before in silk it sleeps.
> It sleeps awhile before it flies,
> And flies awhile before it dies,
> And that's the end of three good tries.
>
> —GERARD PREVIN MEYER.

MADCAP SATIRIST: No reader, new to the madcap proclivities of that tender yet ironic modern, Peter Viereck, should be dissuaded from reading **"The First Morning"** (Scribner, $3), a truly admirable book of poetry. What gets in the way of his freshly-minted lyrics is not his art, compulsive and genuine as it is, but his intolerable egoism, which permits him to intrude subordinate irrelevancies that might well have appeared in an appendix. The adjunctive accouterments of epigraphs, parenthetic subscriptions and superscriptions to titles, asterisks, and footnotes do not let several poems breathe as they should on the page. The reader is occasionally spared these personal divagations, but he should be forewarned that he had better have a multilingual lexicon at

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his disposal, since Mr. Viereck does not include translations from the Italian, French, German, Latin, and Latinized Greek. Not all the lyrics are delimited by this intellectual extravagance, yet even these are alive with the shock of good writing. If Mr. Viereck is not beholden to Eliot, he still shows traces of indebtedness to Pound, Edith Sitwell, Auden, and Cummings. These influences he incorporates adroitly into his work.

This book is as strikingly new as "Terror and Decorum" and superior to "Strike through the Mask," from which a few lyrics have been taken, some altered slightly, but all carefully integrated in the new sections. Such music as there is in "Stanzas in Love with Life and August," "To Be Sung," "Again, Again!" belies the charge that the modernist is deaf to lyricism. Mr. Viereck's grotesqueries in his satiric pieces are excusable when they do not impeach the quality of his writing. The daemon of poetry is at work in him as "The First Morning" certainly attests. —I. L. S.

MORE THAN CRAFTSMANSHIP: Five years and three books ago, this reviewer

felt it his duty to point out what he felt were certain limitations in the poetry of Joseph Joel Keith. Now that **"The Stubborn Root"** (University of Nebraska Press, $3)—Mr. Keith's seventh collection of poems—comes to hand, the time seems ripe for a reappraisal.

This new collection suggests that this poet's outward-going interests ("let us reach for. . . .something to give, not keep") have enlarged. While he likes to phrase his comments on the human condition, as before, in shorter lyric forms, often in brief vignettes, the beverage served up from this "stubborn root" is certainly stronger than it was. The muted tone, the delicate hush of the earlier poems which, I thought, bespoke of somewhat artful artlessness, have given way, more often, to a concern with the troubling and troubled side which is so characteristic of the contemporary scene ("Lapping our wounds, our deep thoughts wind/through brambles. . .")

Correspondingly, the level of intensity has risen, to make possible some memorable lines. Here are three, taken at random: "and madness shrieking down the rotten stair"—"the antiseptic order everywhere"—"and calls forth death where little deaths arise." —G. P. M.

SINGLE MASTERPIECE: "Heaven gives its glimpses only to those/In no position to look too close . . ." is the tribute Robert Frost paid to the genius of Ridgely Torrence a quarter of a century ago. Torrence, who took a passing glimpse at the mirror of mortality and caught its radiance in his own poetry, was slightly disconcerted by the two-edged meaning of the couplet. Did the brilliance of earth contain only in itself the brilliance of paradise? No, he never gave the imp in Frost the chance to hold an irreverent whiplash over him. He accepted the praise with the same modesty he accepted encomia from Houseman and Hodgson, his peers. Like them, he produced one book of poetry, **"Poems"** (Macmillan, $2), a masterpiece, for posterity to judge.

A true American mystic, heir to the Transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau, Ridgely Torrence was of his time. Not oracular, he was a see-er, who endured the political distemper of the age, its violent world wars, its social outrages. To these themes he brought the incandescence of his rare intelligence and vision.

It is difficult to name one superb lyric or one of the narrative poems without naming almost all as evidence of Torrence's skill, art, music, and poetic sensibility. How lodged in the mind his memorable lines become as they keep sounding in the inner ear. No one can read "Prothalamium" (to a bride in war time) or "The Son" without experiencing heartbreak, or "Men and Wheat" with its contemplative tragic overtones:

The sheaves of men lie flat
And are buried where they bleed.
But what dread food is that?
And what mouths does it feed?
—I. L. S.

SIGHTS, SOUNDS, PEOPLE, PLACES: Candace Thurber Stevenson's first book of poems, **"First the Blade"** (Dutton, $2.75), has been long overdue. For some time now, readers of current periodicals have been coming across her felicitous verses, and relishing

(*Continued on page* 31)

The Tree

By May Sarton

AS IT IS brought in with its coat
Smelling of wilderness and yet not furry,
It still has an untamed look,
As if it might crash the ceiling
Or lie down in a corner and refuse
All welcome, an unwilling prisoner.
Small children and animals are wary
For fear it might break out or simply die,
Until it is time to set it up on end,
Sturdy, sweet-smelling, and so high
It makes a shelter and becomes a friend.

This is the moment to uncover
In boxes so light, what can they hold?—
From softest tissue to unwrap and gather
The apples of silver, the apples of gold.
Now gently deck the boughs, gently unfurl
The sprung branch that will wear
This lightest jewel in its pungent fur.
Is it real? Will it stay? Has it come
From so far, long ago, just to bloom
Just tonight, heart's desire, in this room?
The candles are lit, one by one, very slowly.
All gaze; all are silent; each child is holy.

The smallest, in pajames, goes and lies
Under the boughs with wholly dazzled eyes,
And as he looks up at the gaudy toys
They become strange and spiritual joys,
While the tree, stranger once from wilderness,
Is an angelic presence that can bless;
And all wound round now with the blazing truth,
The boy, the tree together are redeeming myth.

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The Saturday Review

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Living with the H-Bomb: Some Thoughts for the New Year

"BY FAR the greatest obstacle to the progress of science and to the undertaking of new tasks and provinces therein, is found in this—that men despair and think things impossible."

—FRANCIS BACON.

* * *

"Laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times."

—THOMAS JEFFERSON.

* * *

"The age in which we live should be distinguished by some glorious enterprise. . . . Let the leaders contrive to put an end to our present troubles. The treaties of peace are insufficient for their purpose; they may retard, but cannot prevent, our misfortunes. We stand in need of some more durable plan, which will forever put an end to our hostilities and unite us by the lasting ties of mutual affection and fidelity."

—ISOCRATES.

* * *

"Great as the Universe is, man is yet not always satisfied with it. For there is nothing so large but the mind of the moral man can conceive of something still larger which nothing in the world can hold. There is nothing so small but the mind of the moral man can conceive of something still smaller which nothing in the world can split."

—CONFUCIUS.

* * *

"Every epoch has its character determined by the way its populations react to the material events which they encounter. This reaction is determined by their basic beliefs—by their hopes, their fears, their judgments of what is worth while. They may rise to the greatness of an opportunity, seizing its drama, perfecting its art, exploiting its adventure, mastering intellectually and physically the network of relations that constitutes the very being of the epoch. On the other hand, they may collapse before the perplexities confronting them. How they act depends partly on their courage, partly on their intellectual grasp. Philosophy is an attempt to clarify those fundamental beliefs which finally determine the emphasis of attention that lies at the base of character."

—ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD.

* * *

"If men can be found who revolt against the spirit of thoughtlessness, and who are personalities sound enough and profound enough to let the ideals of ethical progress radiate from them as a force, there will start an activity of the spirit which will be strong enough to evoke a new mental and spiritual disposition in mankind."

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER.

* * *

"Theft, incest, infanticide, parricide, have all had a place among virtuous actions. Can anything be more ridiculous than that a man should have the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of the water, and because his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have none with him?"

—BLAISE PASCAL.

* * *

"It can hardly be a matter for surprise that our race has not succeeded in solving any large part of its most difficult problems in the first millionth part of its existence. Perhaps life would be a duller affair if it had, for to many it is not knowledge but the quest for knowledge that gives the greatest interest to thought—to travel hopefully is better than to arrive."

—SIR JAMES JEANS.

* * *

"Man . . . is the best of all animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all, for armed injustice is the more dangerous, and he is equipped at birth with arms, meant to be used with intelligence and virtue, but which he may use for the worst ends."

—ARISTOTLE.

* * *

"Socrates neither set out benches for his students, nor sat on a platform, nor set hours for his lectures. He was philosophizing all the time—while he was joking, while he was drinking, while he was soldiering, whenever he met you on the street. and at the end when he was in prison and drinking the poison. He was the first to show that all your life, all the time, in everything you do, whatever you are doing, is the time for philosophy."

—PLUTARCH.

* * *

"Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man."

—DAVID HUME.

* * *

"All mankinde is of one Author, and is one volume; when one Man dies, one Chapter is not torne out of the booke, but translated into a better language; and every Chapter must be so translated; God emploies several translators; some peeces are translated by age, some by sicknesse, some by warre, some by justice; but Gods hand is in every translation; and his hand shall binde up all our scattered leaves againe, for that Librarie where every booke shall lie open to one another. As therefore the Bell that rings to a Sermon, calls not upon the Preacher onely, but upon the Congregation to come; so this Bell calls us all: but how much more mee, who am brought so neere the doore by this sicknesse."

—JOHN DONNE.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Franz Schoenberner Recovers

▶ READERS OF *The Saturday Review* well remember the misfortune of the distinguished German writer and former editor of *Simplicissimus,* Franz Schoenberner, who was on his way to become an equally distinguished writer in English. Last December he was wantonly assaulted and beaten into almost complete paralysis. The American PEN club took up his plight, and a statement was published in this *Review* [LETTERS, *SR* April 5] which helped to provide much of the care and medical attention which saved him from imminent death.

It is a pleasure to announce that Mr. Schoenberner, whose sixtieth birthday will be celebrated on December 20, has been restored if not to entire health at least to renewed usefulness. He is able again to write, and to plan to lead a normal intellectual existence. He has already begun a new book, and to see his friends. Those in the literary and journalistic world who responded so promptly and generously to his calamity should be congratulated, as well as Mr. Schoenberner himself.

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY.

New York, N. Y.

Athene, Youth & Eight Ball

▶ DOUBLE-CROSTIC No. 976, the first of Mrs. Wortman's published by you, proved to be a worthy successor to the Kingsley 975. Athene, Youth, On the hearth, North, Thrush, together with Ghillies suggested by Mrs. Bosworth and Eight Ball suggested by my son, whose acquaintance with pool rooms is more extensive than my own, gave a sufficient start so that the rest worked out readily.

I had many interesting discussions of puzzles with Mrs. Kingsley and regretted greatly that she was for health reasons forced to leave and to retire. I am sure however that we shall continue to have the delightful puzzles continued, and from my previous experience with Mrs. Wortman's work I am sure that there will be no loss of quality.

WAYNE C. BOSWORTH.

Middlebury, Vt.

Hollywood Did More

▶ UPON WHAT AUTHORITY does Hollis Alpert in "Talk with a Movie Censor" [*SR* Nov. 22] base his statement that "Hollywood . . . had done little to promote its own interests . . . in the abolition of censorship." Has he consulted the cases involving the motion pictures "Curley," "Lost Boundaries," and "Pinky," all of which arose before "The Miracle" case, and were produced in Hollywood, USA?

But for the fact that the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals failed to render a decision between May 1951 (when the case was submitted), and January 30, 1952, the "Pinky" case might have preceded or accompanied "The Miracle" in the Supreme Court of the United States. This is mentioned not to deprecate the efforts and achievements of Joseph Burstyn and his attorney, but to demonstrate that "Hollywood" did more than a "little" to assist in the fight to overturn censorship.

PHILIP J. O'BRIEN, JR.

New York, N. Y.

Seldes to Seldes

▶ GILBERT SELDES in his article "TV & the Voter" [*SR* Dec. 6] is quite right in saying that "the weight of evidence in the past twenty years is five to one against the idea that the party that spends more wins the election." But it holds good only for the Roosevelt era.

If Mr. (Gilbert) Seldes were an assiduous reader of the works of Mr. (George) Seldes he would have found the documentation of the claim that in most instances the party with the largest budget wins the election. Among the authorities for such a claim are Professor Louise Overacker, who has written books and pamphlets on the subject, one called "Money in Elections"; and the economics department of New York University, which issued a pamphlet confirming the claim.

GEORGE SELDES.

Norwalk, Conn.

McCarthyism?

▶ I'M GETTING SICK and tired of hearing constantly that, in the words of Gilbert Seldes in "TV & the Voter," Vice President-elect Richard Nixon's story of his financial affairs "was partial or evasive." If Mr. Seldes, or any other of Mr. Nixon's myriad critics, has any proof of any wrongdoing on Mr. Nixon's part why, in the interests of good citizenship, doesn't he publish it? Why must we listen to vicious smears, innuendoes, and canards designed to tear down a man's reputation? Sounds to me like "McCarthyism." I make a blunt statement: nobody, Mr. Seldes included, has anything on Mr. Nixon. Mr. Truman would have let us know about it a long time ago.

VICTOR LASKY.

New York, N. Y.

Books to Fit

▶ I PURCHASE about 125 new books a year and I now have a library of over 4,000 volumes. I should like information as to how to arrange my books so that I can find them when I want them.

Although I use all the wall space floor to ceiling of two good-sized rooms, I cannot arrange my books because publishers insist on issuing a wide variety of sizes. To arrange chronologically, as biographies, of which I have 1,808, or alphabetically, I must provide shelf space for the tallest book any publisher may dream of putting out. To do this would mean my taking over yet another room.

As most of my books are purchased by mail after reading reviews, it might help if you would give the height of all books reviewed, so I will know whether I can place the volume if I bought it. Please understand that I have 386 lineal feet of bookshelves, ranging from nine inches to eighteen inches.

ROBERT E. BARCLAY.

Kansas City, Mo.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *If any of our readers have any suggestions for Mr. Barclay, we will be glad to forward them to him. Allied with the problem of cataloguing, of course, is the problem of pruning—a surgery to be undertaken annually, at least. Perhaps, Mr. Barclay, 186 lineal feet of books would be easier to handle than 386.*

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Seeing Things

ETRE OU NE PAS ETRE

"WORDS, words, words," says Hamlet. But what words? English or French, Shakespeare's or Gide's*—it does make a difference.

Take "bon voyage," for example. Americans do not have to speak French to understand that. It not only translates itself but has its definite associations. These include partings at a pier, or books and baskets sent to a boat. It was a little startling, therefore, for New Yorkers to have Jean-Louis Barrault's Prince turn to the Polonius he had just slain and say, "Bon voyage." "Farewell" is Shakespeare's word, a word which Gide elsewhere translated as "adieu."

After the first shock (which brought a laugh) second thought suggested that Gide had a definite nuance in mind when he chose "bon voyage" instead of "adieu" for Hamlet's apostrophe to Polonius. His intention was to differentiate, as Shakespeare did not try to do, between the seriousness, say, of Gertrude's emotions at Ophelia's grave or Hamlet's affection for his dead mother and the humorous fondness the Prince felt for such a windy, though lovable, old busybody as Polonius.

I do not mean to overstress the importance of "bon voyage" as opposed to "farewell." I single out these expressions only because in their way they were symptomatic of the perhaps inevitable differences between "Hamlet" as we Americans are accustomed to hearing it and having it played and "Hamlet" as we heard and saw it when it was being given in French by M. Barrault and his company from Paris.**

Some fifty-three years ago when Sarah Bernhardt was rash enough to attempt the Dane in London, Max Beerbohm said, "The only compliment one can conscientiously pay her is that her Hamlet was, from first to last, *très grande dame*." He maintained that her friends ought to have restrained her, the native critics ought not to have encouraged her, and the customs officials at Charing Cross ought to have confiscated her sable doublet and hose.

Beerbohm's objections were not limited to the fact that Hamlet, however effeminate, could not be played by a woman. He raised another and far more important point. Since it had to do with the unbridgeable difference between French and English, and more particularly between French and Shakespearean poetry, it seems to me that this same point can be made with equal justice against Barrault's decision to bring "Hamlet" to America.

Barrault, Madeleine Renaud, and their company from Paris are players who have deserved the universal admiration they have won in New York. They have brought brilliance to a dull

season. Only the Greek National Theatre has equaled them in distinction. By the dazzling versatility with which they have turned from Molière and Marivaux to Feydeau, Anouilh, and Kafka they have shown theatregoers what acting at its best can be. If they have proved their skill beyond question, they have also demonstrated the irreplaceable advantages of having worked together for a long time, and in repertory.

It is because I respect them as I do that I, for one, wish they had left their "Hamlet" at home. For Parisians it may be satisfactory; for us it was bound to present difficulties. Reverse the situation and those difficulties speak for themselves. Had the best players we have invaded Paris in English translations of "Phèdre" and "Le Cid," the results would have been as disturbing to Parisians as this Gallic "Hamlet" was to some of us.

In the case of the Bernhardt production Beerbohm had to admit that the translation seemed to him very skilful indeed. The authors, he conceded, had got the nearest equivalents that could be got. In the same way André Gide's prose rendering of the text was astonishingly faithful. It was clear, clean, and precise, and followed the original line by line. But to my ears at least it suffered from exactly the same faults Beerbohm spotted in that earlier attempt.

It, too, was "thin, dry, cold." It, too, made clear that the French language, "limpid and exquisite, though it is," affords no scope for Shakespearean phrases which "are charged with a dim significance beyond their meaning and with reverberations beyond their sound." It, too, cut away the shadows which, according to Beerbohm and to most of us, make the play not only immortal but intelligible. It did everything except sing and soar, and was never more disconcerting than when its words came closest to being the equivalents of Shakespeare's.

MY FRENCH being the poor hillbilly, Harvard thing it is, I would not dare to comment on Gide's language, if since childhood Shakespeare's language had not been as familiar to me as it is to most English-speaking playgoers. To the Barrault productions of "Amphitryon" and "Les Fourberies de Scapin" I came as a foreigner, bringing only a "parapluie-de-matante" knowledge of Molière's tongue. My struggle was to understand, and I was surprised and delighted when I did.

In the presence of this French version of "Hamlet," however, I enjoyed the native's advantage. I knew what was coming and waited for it to come, wondering what would happen to it when it had ceased to be phrased in Shakespeare's words. To be sure, there was childish amusement to be had from hearing—and recognizing—"Fragilité, ton nom est: femme"; "Etre ou ne pas être, telle est la question"; "Entre au couvent"; "Une touche. Une touche très évidente"; "Le reste est silence," etc., etc. Yet such approximations, though doubtless as close to the sense as it is possible to get, supplied a different music. For the French they may have a beauty of their own. For us they offered no substitutes for the original melody.

What was true of single phrases is even truer of the great speeches. A few lines from one of these, first in English, then in French, are enough to indicate the music that has been lost in spite of the accuracy of Gide's translation.

O! that this too too solid flesh would melt,

---

*HAMLET, translated by André Gide. Bilingual edition edited by Jacques Schiffrin. New York: Pantheon Books. 286 pp. $2.50.

**HAMLET, by William Shakespeare, translated into French by André Gide. Directed by Jean-Louis Barrault. Settings and costumes by André Masson. Music by Arthur Honegger. Presented by S. Hurok with the cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the French Government under the auspices of the Association Française d'Action Artistique. With a cast including Jean-Louis Barrault, Jacques Dacqmine, Pierre Bertin, Jean Desailly, Jean-Claude Michel, Jean-François Calvé, Gabriel Cattand, Jean-Pierre Granval, Charles Mahieu, Jean Juillard, Marie-Hélène Dasté, Simone Valère, etc. At the Ziegfeld Theatre, New York City.

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Thaw and resolve itself into a dew;
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!
O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and
unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this
world.

Chair trop massive, oh! si tu pouvais
fondre, t'évaporer, te résoudre en
rosée!
Pourquoi contre le suicide l'Eternel
a-t-il dressé ses lois? Mon Dieu!
Mon Dieu!
combien me semble abject, plat,
fatigant,
improfitable tout l'ordinaire de cette
vie.

Considering the difficulties, if not the impossibilities, of translating Shakespeare, such muted glories in his language were to be expected. What did surprise me was the makeshift way in which this French "Hamlet" was played, set, and directed. The production had three features of indisputable excellence. One was the Ghost who, as costumed and made up, looked as if he had really quit his grave. Another was Simone Valère who, after starting out as the most negative of Ophelias, played the mad scenes with an originality and brilliance seldom matched. Then there was the Claudius of Jacques Dacqmine, a characterization of great skill and credibility, which, good as it was, would have been even better had it had the benefit of contributive direction.

WITH these exceptions the performance, including Barrault's Dane, struck me as being far removed from the spirit and demands of the text. Physically, it was one of those shoddy, gray velvet curtain affairs. Its action was concentrated on so small an area of the stage that there was no room for proper movement or pictorial effects. Its play-within-the-play scene, Ophelia's burial, and the final duel suffered especially from such overcrowding and constriction.

Certainly, compared to "Amphitryon" and "Scapin," "Hamlet" was subject to a skimpy production. Where the Molière plays, because of the settings and costumes of the late Christian Bérard, gloried in that taste, style, and beauty the world associates with France, Shakespeare's tragedy was dressed and housed like an orphan. This would not have mattered had the richness of the interpretation made up for the poverty of the furnishings.

Unfortunately, this French "Hamlet" appeared to have no driving idea behind it. Instead of being traditional or innovational, it moved through its scenes like an army without a general. Its Polonius was a playing-card figure: its Gertrude could have been cut out of a stained-glass window. Laertes was a young man left undefined; Horatio was no more than a benevolent male nurse. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern suggested stormtroopers who had wandered in from another script. Even Osric was more slug than water-fly.

Most important of all, of course, was Barrault's Hamlet. He seemed as a performer to suffer from the same uncertainty which marred his direction. Every actor is free to create his own Hamlet. No one can deny that. But once a player has determined on his own particular interpretation of the part, he must justify that interpretation by the way in which he coordinates his reading of single speeches or scenes into a logical whole.

It was here, I think, that Barrault failed, and failed surprisingly, considering how fine an actor he is. Although he had his interesting single scenes and his moments of high intensity, his Hamlet was a thing of shreds and patches. It was left unassembled. At one moment it was read with an easy colloquialism, at the next in the grand manner. Occasionally, as in the play-within-the-play scene, when as Prince of Denmark he stretched out on the floor in the presence of the whole Court with one foot raised, Barrault, the accomplished mime, would get the better of the gifted actor. At such moments what he was doing with his body naturally nullified the words he was speaking.

Everyone has heard of "Hamlet" without Hamlet. This French production was "Hamlet" not only without Hamlet and many of the other characters but without Shakespeare, too. For American consumption it would have been wiser for these brilliant actors from Paris to limit themselves to doing those plays which our actors cannot touch and at which the French excell.

—JOHN MASON BROWN.

Broadway Postscript

JOSEPHINE HULL is probably unequaled at portraying imperturbable benignancy in the face of any degradation up to and including thirteen murders. However, she is not, apparently, geared for the reverse, where she must play a slightly alcoholic old lady whose simulation of a kindly old grandmama converts a group of barflies to a more domestic existence. Neither is she a match for the ineptness of playwright Robert Finch. His "Whistler's Grandmother" has a stylish set by Leo Kerz, but not much else worth mentioning.

—HENRY HEWES.

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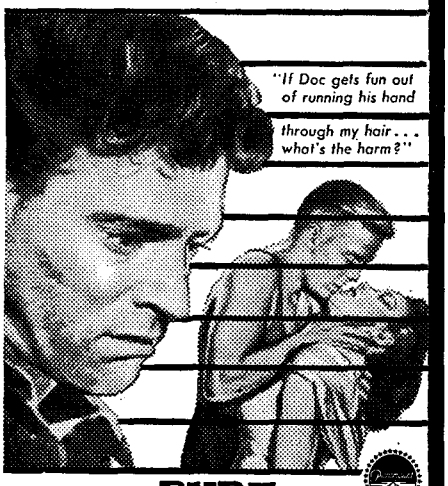

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Come Back, Little Sheba
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Victoria
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SR Goes to the Movies

A BOUQUET FOR EVERYBODY

THERE is an important though strangely ignored distinction between great film acting and the work of most star performers. A movie star, almost by definition, is less an actor than a personality, a symbol. Gary Cooper is the strong silent man, Joan Crawford the lacquered lady with a past, Spencer Tracy a diamond in the rough. Each has his special set of mannerisms and speech patterns—plus that indefinable aura once called "It"—which, given the proper story and a reasonably good director, can create on the screen a persuasive, believable character. But Cooper in a drawing room or Crawford in a comedy are equally uncomfortable. And so stars tend to become "typed," not simply because type casting is easier but because, in most cases, typing is truer to their actual ability to project an imagined person in a fictional set of circumstances. Rare indeed is the movie actor who can change type and portray a wide variety of characters with equal conviction. Garbo, Chaplin, Bette Davis, John Barrymore, more recently Richard Widmark. These are the real film *actors*.

To them now must be added Shirley Booth, the star of "Come Back, Little Sheba" (Paramount). In just one film she asserts her consummate artistry, her ability to create and sustain a complex character through a wide variety of emotional conflicts and crises. Never typed on the stage, Miss Booth has played with equal skill the ex-Follies chorine in "Three Men on a Horse," the resourceful Ruth in "My Sister Eileen," the vicious magazine writer in "The Philadelphia Story," the understanding teacher in "Tomorrow the World," the romantic lady of the current "Time of the Cuckoo," and, of course, the good-natured prostitute in last season's musical version of "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn"—not forgetting memorable performances in innumerable less memorable plays. For years she was arranging curtain times so that she could also be the comic Miss Duffy of "Duffy's Tavern" on radio. Along Broadway you used to hear, "That Shirley Booth, all she needs is one good play." With "Come Back, Little Sheba" she got it. Her performance as Lola Delaney, the slatternly wife of an alcoholic, brought her not only tremendous public recognition but, after more than twenty-five years in the theatre, stardom as well.

John Mason Brown has already written fully about the wonder of Miss Booth on the stage—"one of the most gifted actresses our theatre boasts," he said. The incredible thing is how completely, how devastatingly she has recreated Lola in terms of the camera. From the first moment we see her, waddling sleepily down the stairs, pausing automatically to adjust the clock in passing, we know the essentials of Lola's life—a shabby, somnolent affair to be gotten through as easily and painlessly as possible. Then deftly, subtly, come the added touches —the endless platitudes, her simple good-heartedness, her pathetic dependence on her husband, her romantic visions of the past. And ever and again, the reminder of her slovenliness—the broken bedroom slippers, the formless housedress, the hairbrush on the kitchen table. Slowly, out of a myriad of incidents and tiny actions, Lola Delaney begins to take shape. Not as someone you admire or love, but as a sad, commonplace woman whom you know and pity.

WILLIAM INGE asked nothing more from his play. He shows, almost as a case history, the heartbreak of little people, the frustration of their wholly conventional lives. He preaches no moral, points no accusatory finger. But implicit in his work is the conviction that people are important, and he makes his appeal for sympathy and understanding by plunging us beneath the cold surface of events. His Doc Delaney drinks, but he is not just a drunk. Behind the bottle stands a promising career blasted when he left medical school to marry the girl he had made pregnant. Nor is Lola simply a slattern. Too stupid to comprehend fully what has happened to

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S KINGSLEY DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 978)

OGDEN NASH:
A CAROL FOR CHILDREN

Yours be the genial holly wreaths
The stockings and the tree;
An aged world to you bequeaths
Its own forgotten glee. . . .

God rest you merry, Innocents,
While innocence endures.
A sweeter Christmas than we to ours,
May you bequeath to yours!

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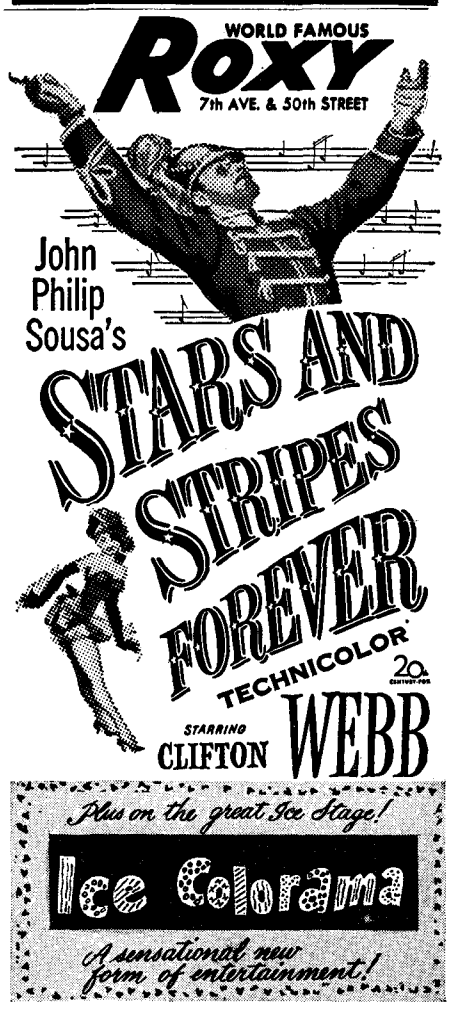
her life, she shuttles between a romanticized past, when she was the most popular girl in town, and a hopeful future when "everything will be all right," trying to ignore the unhappy present in which Doc is struggling against liquor with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous.

ALL of this, the heart of Inge's play, has been translated to the screen with a rare fidelity. There is perhaps a more hopeful final scene than the stage suggested, a few minor changes in incident. At the same time, a number of important sequences have been added—notably an A.A. meeting and a harrowing few minutes in the city hospital where Doc is taken after his bout with the bottle. Completely within the spirit of the play, these additions amplify its crucial points. There is no more telling example of Lola's extreme insensitivity than when, after Doc confesses to his fellow A.A.'s that he never thought he could keep away from liquor for a whole year, she loudly whispers to a neighbor, "Neither did I." There is nothing more moving than the single line, spoken by an intern at the hospital over a huge, anguished close-up of Shirley Booth: "He keeps calling for Lola, pretty Lola. Who's Lola?" Ketti Frings's screenplay brilliantly holds to the action of the play, but her approach is decidedly filmic.

It is to the credit of young Daniel Mann, the director of the stage version, that he has completely realized the potentialities of her script. Mann, directing his first movie, has somehow sensed the difference between the two forms. He freely gives his cameraman, veteran James Wong Howe, much of the credit for the fluidity, the intelligent camera set-ups, and lighting of this picture. But Mann himself has done a magnificent job of matching camera placement against the emotional tensions of a scene. There are relatively few large close-ups of actors talking back and forth. The camera moves in only for such climactic moments as the scene at the hospital, or Miss Booth's heartbreaking, half-articulate telephone call to her mother asking if she might come home for a while after the tragedy. For the rest, the camera remains discreetly close without being obtrusive, swinging nimbly to follow action through the narrow confines of the Delaneys' shabby rooms.

The performances right down the line are beyond reproach, another

THE STAR: Shirley Booth, an actress of overwhelming talent who, in the past two-and-a-half years of her twenty-seven on Broadway, has made a clean sweep of almost every stage award in the theatre, is at last on the screen. "Honestly," Miss Booth reminisced self-effacingly the other day at her place on West Fifty-fourth Street, eleven stories up, "it didn't occur to me that Hollywood would be interested in me." A toy poodle—ten-weeks-old, the color of apricots, and named Prego after an all-round Italian word in "The Time of the Cuckoo," Miss Booth's current hit—galloped happily around the living room as Miss Booth discussed Miss Booth of the film, "Come Back, Little Sheba." "People took it for granted from the beginning that I would do Lola. *I* didn't. I had done other broadway plays—'Three Men on a Horse,' 'My Sister Eileen,' 'The Philadelphia Story'—and hadn't been asked when they were made into movies." It was Hal Wallis who finally did ask for a test. "Well, I was sort of curious to see what I'd look like on the screen," Miss Booth owned up enthusiastically. "It was a pleasant surprise. And they were so very much impressed. Well, maybe they really want me to do this, I thought. So I overcame my scruples. I'd thought all along that I was far too frightening to be seen head-on." Scruples, it turned out, had something to do with "looks." "I never thought pictures would be for me," she said, a smile on her merry, expressive face, as she resuscitated her c. 1940-thinking. "I didn't have the big eyes, the lovely nose, the dazzling smile. People never came up to me and said, '*You* should be in movies.' It was only later, when Hollywood went somewhat off the 'looks' diet, that I got interested." Once in Hollywood, Miss Booth said, "I had a charmed existence. Making 'Sheba' took on an aura of rearing a love child. Lola took readjustment from stage to screen, to keep her in tune with a younger Doc. Sidney [Blackmer] was more comfortably mature. Burt [Lancaster] was like a sabre—tall, forceful. I couldn't lie back on that character and be his little girl, like I was Sidney's." As to how she found Hollywood—"I," she said, "was too busy to find it for a couple of months. Then, I found it most kind, most generous," Miss Booth added, leaning forward and sweeping Prego off the floor. —BERNARD KALB.



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tribute to the talent of the director. Of Shirley Booth, no more need be said. Her Lola evokes a dumb and devastating pity. But Burt Lancaster is the real surprise. Shrewd as this bit of casting was for box-office purposes, he proves an even shrewder choice dramatically. Again referring to screen personalities, Lancaster has built a reputation for brutal, physical action roles. And skilfully as he underplays the quiet, patient Doc, there is still the lurking reminder that this is Burt Lancaster, whose rigidly controlled calm conceals a keg of dynamite. Terry Moore gives a carefully balanced performance as the naive yet seductive Marie, and Philip Ober lends just the right degree of oversolicitude as Doc's A.A. friend.

Indeed, there are so many felicitous details in this production it becomes impossible to suggest that any one person was responsible for all of them. Who, for example, saw to it that there was only the tiniest lump of ice left in the ice-box when Doc comes down to get breakfast for himself? Who thought of the instant coffee? the little tear on the front door screen? the bad papering job in the dinette? placing the dinner table so near the wall that Lola has to squeeze past to serve? All one can truthfully say is that Hal Wallis, the producer, has assembled a crew that from prop boy to performer seems to have grasped fully the intent and character of "Come Back, Little Sheba." Together they have created a memorable and deeply moving film.

—ARTHUR KNIGHT.

SR Recommends

Come Back, Little Sheba: Reviewed in this issue.

Face to Face: Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane, and Hollywood collaborate here in a highly valuable "duo-drama." (*SR* Dec. 20.)

Two Cents' Worth of Hope: Life in an Italian village, imaginatively re-created by director Castellani. (*SR* Dec. 13.)

Forbidden Games: A memorable exploration into the child's world, filmed in France. (*SR* Dec. 6.)

Breaking through the Sound Barrier: By no means a conventional "space-opera," this drama is given the benefit of a magnificent performance by Sir Ralph Richardson. (*SR* Nov. 22.)

Life Begins Tomorrow: Sartre, Gide, Corbusier, and Rostand beg for peace while showing off their latest projects in this French "documentary." (*SR* Nov. 22.)

Limelight: Chaplin's new film, hailed by some as a masterpiece, criticized by others as sentimental and banal, but well worth seeing at either evaluation. (*SR* Oct. 25.)

A Father's Dilemma: An Italian villager loses a dress, makes love, brawls with the town in a brilliant imported comedy. (*SR* Oct. 18.)

TV and Radio

FM ON THE REBOUND

IT WAS Edna St. Vincent Millay who wrote during World War II:

> The tidal wave devours the shore:
> There are no islands any more.

With bright-arrowed irony, the couplet epitomizes an unheralded situation which, perhaps more than any other, is propelling FM radio irresistibly towards a considerably brighter future in sound broadcasting.

In 1937, when the first five-year North American Regional Broadcast Agreement became effective to regulate international air-wave traffic over national boundaries, the United States had more broadcasting experience than its neighbors, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, the Bahamas. The United States set the treaty standards and secured many clear-channel advantages. We insulated ourselves within the walls of an airy feudal island.

Our pioneer radio stations, consequently, could propagate their sky-wave AM signals at night for distances up to 800 miles or more without fear of interference from transmitters in neighboring countries. The monopoly structure of our early chains was founded on this impressive coverage, making viable their profitable rates. In 1940—the same year, curiously, in which Miss Millay wrote the lines quoted above—the Federal Communications Commission approved FM—frequency modulation, a static-free, high-fidelity broadcasting superior to the earlier method.

It was then that the adventures of inventor Major Edwin H. Armstrong's "better mousetrap" began; and the tale of FM's frequent misfortunes since then, fully orchestrated with charges of suppression, high financial intrigue, and suspicions of personal feud and sabotage makes excellent material for a drama of technology that longs to be written. The allegation that the early big-power clear-channel stations feared a new system which would challenge their favored position, and conspired to stop FM by methods covert as well as open, rises like a logical Everest from the landscape of contention.

The first regional broadcast agreement and a subsequent interim agreement have expired. The new agreement has still to be ratified. It ran afoul of the non-insular fact that our sister nations had gone to school in the intervening years and learned about broadcasting. The communication across the second international negotiating table was no longer one-way. Mexico did not get what she wanted and walked out—amicably. Though not bound, she still honors the spirit of the former agreements. Our representatives, in order to get any new agreement at all, had to give Cuba a number of assignments she wanted; and this has "degraded" much of our clear-channel service due to interference.

Though many time buyers in advertising agencies are not yet aware of it, the wall of sky-wave signal propagation at night, the important listening time, has been pulled back in some instances to around 300 miles. The pattern of coverage so jealously hoarded by pioneer stations has suffered an "air change." The emperor, no doubt, was nobly dressed twenty years ago. Today, still far from naked, his pants have shrunk.

THERE were considerably less than 1,000 AM radio stations in 1930, with wide gaps in national coverage. There are 2,300 AM stations now, and 720 FM. Competition is tougher. Once people find out what FM radio offers them in freedom from static, wider program range, and fuller tonal quality, AM for them usually becomes the "antediluvian" medium. Recurrent static frequently makes AM listening impossible in many parts of the country. Then, there is TV, which has largely pre-empted night-time audiences in big cities. All the while that rising costs kept AM rates going up, the thousands of listeners it was obliged to deliver kept falling. Surveys on which rates are based did not show this; they generally report only primary county and city areas.

The clear-channel operators are

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still top dog in radio, but they are now looking ahead to the time when others will recognize the full extent of their hollowing monopoly. Having fought FM shall they now switch to it and admit that the game is up? Or shall they stick to AM and reveal what the game was all about? The pressure of the dilemma is opening long-awaited avenues for patient, plodding FM, which welcomes but does not necessarily need them now. The National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters has created an FM department, which seeks to reconcile FM broadcasters and set manufacturers and to harness them into a promotional team. It is spreading the FM gospel cautiously for its 360 members who have FM (a great number of these still merely duplicating AM schedules), hoping not to offend its 1,500 AM members, many of whom would like to see FM quietly "drop dead."

THE slow, steady gains of the FM faithfuls are not without tidal-wave pressures of their own. Zenith Radio continues to carry the FM torch among set manufacturers and to operate WEFM, its own fine music station in Chicago. Recently Zenith conducted a national survey which demonstrated that the cost of advertising inquiries "pulled by FM radio was 55 per cent lower than that of AM radio." WGBH, operated by Lowell Institute Cooperative Broadcasting Council, went on the air October 6, 1951, with a "high quality but not high-hat" schedule featuring notably the Boston Symphony Orchestra. At that time 15.4 per cent of all radio homes in the five metropolitan Boston counties had FM equipment. After WGBH had been on the air a year, the figure jumped to 24.2 per cent—a vivid rise of 57 per cent.

Lack of space precludes noting many other burgeoning FM developments around the country among commercial broadcasters as well as educational. The sum of them points to this: despite frequent reports of its demise, FM is not at all entombed, but alive and reaching ever-widening circles of the American people with an ever-increasing variety of special services. The battle has been hard. There have been casualties where FM licensees, poor managers or exhausted in resources, have failed. But from New Hampshire to Honolulu more FM stations are today coming into being than are going out. A hard-core Gideon's army have kept their lamps burning and their trumpets blowing. Midian, they say, will inevitably be theirs, conquered by the sword of superiority.

—Robert Lewis Shayon.

Music to My Ears

THE MET'S "CARMEN" ON THEATRE TV—MENOTTI, BARTOK & CANTELLI

IF what was seen in New York may be taken as a fair sample of the general effect of the Metropolitan's "Carmen" as televised for paying audiences in theatres across the land, my feeling is that it will be some time before it becomes the regular and profitable adjunct to the theatre's operation that radio has been for nearly twenty years. This may seem an inverted view of a development that carries with it vast possibilities, culturewise, for the country at large; but if the patron is to pay for his TV opera rather than take it as largesse in return for a commercial "message," it has to be a show worth paying for before it can be a cultural influence. In this critical respect, "Carmen" as seen in the Guild Theatre in New York just didn't measure up.

It is one thing to reckon progress in terms of "beginnings," "experiments," "first steps," when the consumer bears with the end product merely in terms of good will, at the investment of nothing more than his time in his own home. Putting a price of seven dollars on participation (as in the Guild Theatre) or even half as much elsewhere, introduces other factors, obviously. I am strong for any new source of income for the Metropolitan especially as by-products of its usual operations: the question, at the moment, would seem to be whether a theatre telecast such as "Carmen" is a product or a bye.

The picture I saw in the Guild Theatre was muddy, poorly defined, and taxing on the eye. It was somewhat better on a screen set up within the opera house itself where, one assumes, maximum values prevailed. Even so, background figures were blurred when the camera was focused on principals in the foreground: close-ups (the most effective by far of the shots employed) tended to make grotesque the facial play and "projection" opera singers develop, defensively, against the huge areas in which they normally perform.

—Borsey & Hawkes.

Bela Bartok—"emotional power."

However, it is worth including for the record that viewers in other parts of the country had another, and mostly better, opinion of the transmission. One critic in Cleveland reported himself more taken by the theatre TV than by the Met's "Carmen" as seen in that city's Public Auditorium; Margaret Harford, of Hollywood's *Citizen-News*, while characterizing the lighting as ranging "from fair to terrible" considered the venture, in general, a success, and cited the local audience reaction as "extremely favorable." Accumulating reports from elsewhere tend also to support the view that in such matters as these distance lends enchantment.

From close up, however, it seemed the nub of the matter is that the television of such an actual performance involves a deep, perhaps irreconcilable conflict. What is right for a theatre seating 3,500 cannot possibly be right for transmission by camera, unless lighting, scenery, action, etc., are contrived with a view to dual service. What will work on a stage where broad effects are designed to mean something for a gallery sitter is of necessity overstressed for a lens. If one falls back on the premise that, with all the deficiencies, one is "bringing the Met" to the far-flung public which cannot come by subway or by plane, one has to answer, also, the questions: How strongly? How clearly? How effectively? Even without the much-missed asset of color, one would have to answer, on the basis of this first "Carmen": weakly, dimly, and ineffectively.

* * *

The curious dualism that puts Menotti, the composer of stage works, in one category, and Menotti, the composer of concert hall works, in another, continued with the first performance of his violin concerto at a Philadelphia Orchestra concert in Carnegie Hall. Without categorizing

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Menotti as conservative or reactionary, my mental image of his work shows him as a composer more forward-looking, certainly, in his reaction to the problems of the stage than he is in his reaction to the problems of abstract music.

Judgment of the violin concerto was complicated by the solo performance of Efrem Zimbalist, whose generosity in standing sponsor for the work brought him out of retirement for the first time in five years. Much of the silky suavity of old remains in the tone, but it is now rather small, and without the dynamic variety to give profile to phrases written against a full orchestral background. The inventive quality of much of the material suggested that it could mean more under other circumstances, though the conventional treatment of the solo instrument didn't encourage hopes of a really strong work by Menotti.

* * *

Guido Cantelli's series of broadcasts contained at least one suitable to stand in a sequence with those of Toscanini which had preceded: the one in which he coupled Mozart's A major (No. 29) symphony with Bartok's "Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta." I did not hear in the Mozart the kind of warm sound and melodic repose I prefer, but it was a remarkable projection of Cantelli's conception.

For another performance of the Bartok as good as this, I'd have to go back to one which Leonard Bernstein gave with the Philadelphia Orchestra four or so years ago (in Philadelphia). At that, Bernstein's, if more dynamic in a purely physical sense, did not evoke as much of the music's essential emotional power as Cantelli did. —Irving Kolodin.

FICTION

(*Continued from page* 17)

the mine from which he earlier dug up that astounding collection of short stories "This Land, These People." His new volume, titled **"These Your Children"** (Beechurst, $4.50), is another collection of stories of Jewish life by American-Jewish writers. Like its predecessor it is an outstanding anthology.

Here are stories of humor, of tragedy, of suffering, and fun. There are twenty-five of them by such authors as Nelson Algren, Budd Schulberg, Arthur Miller, Anzia Yezierska, Ben Hecht. They deal with the Jew as immigrant, with family life among Jews on every economic level, with the Jew as refugee or displaced person, with Israel. Surprisingly few of the stories deal with the problem of anti-Semitism or of persecution of the Jews. As Mr. Ribalow points out in his introduction this problem has more to do with the anti-Semite than with the Jew. The few stories that do touch upon this theme are among the more powerful in the book. All of the stories are of high quality, and it would serve no purpose to single any out as my favorite. You will have your own. And you will find it in a volume beautifully integrated by a skilled editor, beautifully written by twenty-five writers of high literary craftsmanship.

—Edward J. Fitzgerald.

HOMAGE TO THE SCIENTIST: Mitchell Wilson, who seems determined to have us appreciate the creative qualities of the scientist, as celebrating the inventor in his latest work, **"My Brother, My Enemy"** (Little, Brown, $3.75). His story of the late Twenties concerns the Mallory brothers, Davy and Ken, and their sister Margot. From their earliest years they supported each other, emotionally as well as materially, as Davy and Ken struggled to become inventors and to invent, of all things, television. Later, while David maintained his interest in the innocent joys of inventing and discovering for its own sake, Ken became interested in material success and Margot married a millionaire promoter. This following of separate paths supplies Mr. Wilson with the personal conflict for his novel. The rest, and bulk of it, has to do with the aforementioned celebration of invention, filled out with a lot of nice period touches which give an oddly distant quality to this tale of only twenty-five years ago. Mr. Wilson has a way of bearing down a little too heavily on his theme and he plots his work not only solidly but stolidly. However, I think you'll enjoy his picture of men at work inventing, though some may be thrown off by the fact that they're inventing television.

—E. J. F.

SELF-RIGHTEOUS PRIG?: There's irony in the title of Robert Standish's new novel about British manners and morals in the Orient. **"The Worthy Man"** (Macmillan, $3) deals with David Tarrant, a gentleman who always behaves honorably whether dealing with his compatriots or the natives, his beloved or his enemy. He is universally respected and well on his way to winning not only Helen, daughter of the far-flung Marshall trading enterprises for whom David works, but also authority and wealth in the business. But this isn't taking account of Bill Mallard, who is as dastardly as David is worthy, and not above double dealing, thievery, arson, and even murder to gain his ends. By a peculiarly knavish trick Mallard succeeds in wresting the lady and the business from David and forcing David to flee in semi-disgrace. David goes on to become a millionaire in his own right, and to marry second-choice Sheila. Throughout he sticks to his standards of honor and gentlemanliness. But in the end Sheila—and the author—turn on him in a surprising scene and denounce him as a self-righteous prig.

Mr. Standish writes with his usual charm and grace. He creates individual scenes, believable dialogue, credible characters, with deft skill. But this time he's used them all on a rather wobbly structure. And his final judgment of David, along with his title, seems more like an afterthought than an integral and prepared-for part of his original purpose. —E. J. F.

Merchant Voyage, 1850

By Virginia Watson

THE Yellow River and the yellow faces
Lie now behind, the homeward pennant flies.
We'll hear no more the ugly guttural cries,
We've had enough of Cathay's famous places,
Its slant-eyed smiles, pigtails, and tottering graces,
Its belled pagodas tinkling to the skies.
Westward, thank God, our course now lies.
The ship, like mettled horse, to its barn races.
Our wives can count the days, the owners wonder
How many casks of tea, of silken bales . . . .
Now from a "captain's walk" one cries, "Look yonder!
It is the *Mary Ann*. I sewed her sails"—
From my sea chest I take the fringèd shawl
For her who is my compass, my landfall.

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POETRY

(*Continued from page 21*)

their relish in the sights, sounds, and significances of people and places.

The scene is often New England ("These are the hills where I was nourished"), and it is likely that her celebration of this granite foundation-stone of our American structure will ring pleasant changes in the memories of many. In careful and loving detail, "Vermont," the first section of her book, preserves such Bucolica Americana as "back-road houses," "second mowing," and "mountain country."

With the second section of "First the Blade," Mrs. Stevenson's art—primarily descriptive, but never without an affectionate touch of emotion—turns to people. "Sunlight through Vines" presents no wry, acidulous portraits: the eye that the poet trains on her subjects, though perceptive, is kind.

The tone of the first two sections prepares us for the poems of "Largo," which closes the collection. Here the poet faces up to the grave days that have come upon us. It is possible, she says, to look beyond these days "after the earth, time-purged,/has cleansed and cooled." Once again, we are made conscious of the fact that there is nothing quite like looking across those granite hills to give one—especially if one is a poet—the long view.

—G. P. M.

LATTER-DAY MYSTIC: In this age of anxiety, it is no small relief to come on a testament of faith by a poet in his middle-years, Stanley Burnshaw. Confronted by the dilemma of our civilization, he has produced a title-poem in **"Early and Late Testament"** (Dial, $2.50), that for all its length has a rare inner illumination. Such candor and serenity as Mr. Burnshaw achieves in seeking man's ultimate reconciliation to his "anchorage in time and place" have been wanting in much of the poetry written today. He is perhaps closest to the tradition of the late Ridgely Torrence, himself a literary descendant of Emerson and Thoreau. His sensibilities as seer and poet derive in spirit, if not in form, from Whitman too. These good influences make him a latter-day American mystic, and the slight artificial aberrations that invest some of the lines do not deny the corpus of his poetry vision and exaltation.

The magnificent lyrics that intersperse "Early and Late Testament," the "Anonymous Alba" from "Songs for Music," the translation "Nativity" from André Spire, and the apostrophe, "Poetry: The Art" make this book a compelling contribution to our literature. How good Mr. Burnshaw is can be seen from these lines in "Bread" from "The First Testament":

> Such is our meager cycle
> That turns but a single round
>
> For the deathless flesh of the earth,
> For the signless husks of men dead,
> For the folded oceans and mountains,
> For birds, and fields, and for bread.

—I. L. S.

EXPLORING THE WORLD OF ESSENCE: Kathleen Raine is one of the younger British poets whom Stephen Spender, among others, has acclaimed as notable in the generation arisen since 1939. **"The Pythoness, and Other Poems"** (Farrar, Straus & Young, $2.75), her third volume, continues in the vein which she has tapped with increasing success since she began: briefly, Miss Raine is an explorer in the world of essence. As such, she picks her way most delicately, with hardly a false step, among the shards of the visible universe.

A dealer in eternity and the vision which lies always just beyond the world of appearances, Miss Raine is kinswoman to Emily Dickinson (one of the other woman poets with whom she has, inevitably, been compared), as well as to those earlier metaphysicals, Vaughan and Traherne. Like her predecessors along the mystic way, she has "prayed for visions in the night," borne along on "waves that overflow all sense, past sight, past sound."

When she acknowledges the forms of this world—and her senses are finely attuned—she goes at once to the elements of air, water, fire, to relate them immediately to the mysteries which brought them to birth. In short, when she looks at nature, it is always to look *through* nature, like another forebear, Blake ("And once in Lambeth a hidden grain of sand/ Held all the world that vision can command").

Technically, Miss Raine maintains the emotional fluidity and the intellectual control of a poet of the first order. Her verse has been likened to "drops of water," each poem "like a crystal, marvellously clean and clear." I think rather of pure, distant, bell-like tones, chiming into place through very clear air, and in their own clarity supplying the answers that only poetry can give (and only poetry can elucidate) to the only questions that really matter.

—G. P. M.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Mad Margaret, from "Ruddigore," by W. S. Gilbert. 2. Owen and George Tragennis, in "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot," by A. Conan Doyle. 3. The Mad Hatter, from "Alice in Wonderland," by Lewis Carroll. 4. Gerald O'Hara, in "Gone with the Wind," by Margaret Mitchell. 5. Captain Ahab, in "Moby Dick," by Herman Melville. 6. Marguerite, from the opera "Faust," libretto by Barbier and Carré. 7. The Hermit, from "The Prince and the Pauper," by Mark Twain. 8. Orlando, from "Orlando Furioso," by Ariosto. 9. Edward Moulton-Barrett, in "The Barretts of Wimpole Street," by Rudolf Besier. 10. Montresor, from "The Cask of Amontillado," by Edgar Allan Poe.

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—William Carlos Williams

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U. S. A.

(*Continued from page* 14)

tion returns for the past fourteen years is important to the student of American politics.

Mr. Moos does something else. He gives us a new word: psephologist, pronounced, as he carefully points out, sef-OL-ogist from the Greek for pebble. —L. L. L. G.

DIXIE'S FATAL FLAW: A Southern historian once suggested that a monument to the Lost Cause should bear the inscription: "Died of State's Rights." That idea receives strong support in **"The Railroads of the Confederacy"** (University of North Carolina Press, $6), by Robert C. Black III. Weak as Dixie's railroads were in comparison with those of the North—in line miles, construction, rolling stock, and manufacturing facilities—they "formed the backbone . . . of the Southern apparatus of supply and communication" and, if properly used, might have prevented defeat. But railroad owners and managers refused to sacrifice their business interests to national necessity; and the Confederate Congress and President Davis, afraid of angry governors jealous of their states' sovereignty, hesitated to bring the roads under centralized control.

Mr. Black describes clearly the conditions of the Southern railroads on the eve of the war and then the development from emergency to chaos as Union armies cut vital lines and the small store of rails, locomotives, and cars was used up. Ingenious men devised some makeshifts—the Seaboard & Roanoke, which could no longer get Cincinnati bacon for its section hands, cured its own pork and converted the refuse into a lubricant to replace New Bedford whale oil—but shortages of metallic equipment often could not be overcome.

Especially useful for showing the role of the Southern railroads in military strategy are the thirteen maps (one of them a large folding map showing the entire Confederate railroad network) by William K. Hubbell. There are other excellent illustrations. —J. M. E.

THE DOPE ABOUT DOPE: A hit-and-run journey among the flora and fauna of the world of narcotics that will not be received with great enthusiasm by Lucky Luciano is Will Oursler's and Laurence Dwight Smith's **"Narcotics: America's Peril"** (Doubleday, $3.50). The opium poppy, the coca leaf, and the hemp weed are traced from the soil in which they flourish to the point where they are taken by the addict, in the form of opium, cocaine, and marijuana, respectively. It is a terrible story the authors relate, of a hoodlums' international apparently dedicated to making the world half free, half addict. Chapters are devoted to the smuggling of drugs into the U.S., the Mafia, dope-pushing, the twenty-four-hour-a-day fight waged by the Bureau of Narcotics, and international double-talk on control of drugs. Yet the authors do manage to close on a note of optimism, a hope that the tide will turn.

The subject of narcotics is plenty shocking in itself, yet the authors have gone on to compound the shock by frequently writing in a shrill, almost neonized style: ". . . the case of the sloe-eyed Chinese with a withered little finger. She called herself Molly Wendt." At times it is almost too souped-up to read, despite the engrossing story. Three years of intensive research went into the book, the authors claiming it is based on hard fact from the first page to the last. Still, there is a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter in my neighborhood who has his doubts. Having covered narcotics and crime for one of New York's major newspapers himself, he has the feeling that there are a number of unverified charges in the book —like the flat statement that Joe Adonis was a member of the Mafia, or, for that matter, that Frank Costello was. —BERNARD KALB.

LIFE IN THE FARM LABOR CAMPS: Her official title is "Supervisor, Attendance, and Student Welfare" but to the Oakies, Peapickers, gypsies, Mexican laborers, and townsfolk making up her territory, Florence McGehee is the Hookey Cop.

Sometimes Hookey Cops are welcome visitors to the home, more often they are not. **"Please Excuse Johnny"** (Macmillan, $3.50) tells of the times Florence McGehee was welcome and when she was not; of the children she saw and the lives they lived.

It's a fascinating story Mrs. McGehee tells, and an authentic one. She has captured the feeling of hopelessness and resentment in the crowded, filthy farm labor camps. Her dialogue mirrors the sympathy-seeking paranoidal thought pattern typical of the habitually indigent family.

There are the parents who made the "deals." You get Johnny some shoes and we'll see about sending him to school. There are the brilliantly dressed, alien-tongued gypsies who accept, at least on the sur-

Faith in the Earth

By Eric Wilson Barker

FAITH in the earth
transmitted through wood and stone
to my feeling hands, the rough enduring symbols
outlasting human love, the roots deeper,
the fibres tougher, the grave, gray heads
wearing under both skies
their deep and full acceptance, like the sea.
On the grooved and lichened sides my hand moves,
spelling like the blind the cycles of dead seasons:
the rages and the calms,
voices of wind and rain,
the white and summer silences;
in the full-leaved singing shadows
the green love returning under more suns
than have wakened the oldest of men.

Birds in the leaves do not remember
the full throats brimming round rings
of old years in their greenshade song.

But my hand remembers—
tapping through wood and stone
the waters of the aged and ageless springs—
the faith at the fire's center
burning before birdsong or tree,
the changes in the blood toiling
through salt streams to the cloud-loved hill;
the tidemarks blind with grass in the growing sun.
and lichen, leeched to memories of the sea.

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face, the Hookey Cop who calls them "Rumanians" and not gypsies.

With humor and understanding, Mrs. McGehee presents her varied cast. She tells of Mamie, the delightful prostitute, who is sorry she "got that way" again but explains she really can't help it, ". . . a young healthy woman an' all, an' without no husband."

Because the book is of the people she knew, the author knows their virtues and their faults. The avariciousness of Mrs. Warlock, recipient of four bountiful Christmas baskets, brings forth her complaints over the lack of honey in any of the baskets.

There are those who will insist "exaggeration" when they read of twelve-year-old Lucy Jones and her child of an incestuous relationship or of fifteen-year-old Roger who lied for his selfish, amoral mother. They will be wrong, though.

—MAXINE SKUSE.

EDITORIALS IN BLACK AND WHITE: On many editorial pages the political cartoon is the most exciting feature. The perceptive cartoonist doesn't have to worry about grays. To him there is only black and white. Herblock (Herbert Block), one of the best, who lays about him with gusto for the *Washington Post* and 150 other newspapers, in **"The Herblock Book"** (Beacon Press, Boston, $2.75) presents some of his most topical cartoons and a text to go with them.

Whether it be Senators McCarthy or McCarran, the American Medical Association, John L. Lewis, Franco or Stalin, Herblock cuts sharply. Any one of his cartoons is worth many, many editorial preachments on the same subject. The book does not need the text, which in many ways is no more than a gloss on his drawings. Yet in his writing Herblock shows a sense of humor and understanding of the purpose of his craft which make for entertaining reading.

—*From "The Herblock Book."*

"It's Okay—We're Hunting Communists."

Here is what he says of what is expected of a President: "He must be able to knock off for himself the biggest political job in the world, but must not be a 'politician.' He must be a man who can bring about complete unity, and he must take a courageous and forthright stand on all issues. He must be Superman but, of course, just a regular average guy. And his candidacy must be in reluctant response to a popular demand—even if he has to stump every county in the country to create it." —L. L. L. G.

ANTEBELLUM POLITICKING: The rivalry and intrigue within the Democratic Party that led to James K. Polk's nomination in 1844 on a platform calling for the annexation of Texas is the subject of a lively new book by James C. N. Paul, **"Rift in the Democracy"** (University of Pennsylvania Press, $4). Martin Van Buren, defeated for reelection in the rollicking log-cabin campaign of 1840, expected "the sober second thought of the people" to restore him to office four years later. His nomination seemed certain until, through the scheming of Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, the Trojan horse of Texas was pulled into the Democratic camp. A bitter convention battle resulted in the adoption of the two-thirds rule (ruining Van Buren's chances), a deadlock in the balloting, and then a bandwagon movement to Polk, a "dark horse" in the Presidential Derby but a favorite in the early betting for second place on the ticket. The North-South split widened during Polk's Presidency. Jacksonian Democracy became sectional Democracy, and the way opened for disruption of the party and the Union in 1860-61.

This is a much warmed-over subject, but Mr. Paul's presentation of it is strikingly fresh. His crackling prose, incisive characterizations, clear analyses, and dramatic flair make this an absorbing book. It reaches a climax in the chapter on the Baltimore convention. The reader can see Benjamin Butler, in a two-hour speech, bringing his foot crashing down onto the stage; Northern liberals standing on their chairs croaking for recognition; George Bancroft and Gideon Pillow visiting hotel rooms and urging sleepy delegates to switch to Polk. Nothing here seems musty, antiquarian, or unrelated to the present.

Mr. Paul is an attorney serving as Chief Justice Vinson's clerk. Historians can learn a great deal from his book about how to make political history a vital subject. He, in turn, should ask more historians to read his next manuscript to catch his minor flaws. —J. MERTON ENGLAND.

LEGISLATING AGAINST DISCRIMINATION: What effect would a compulsory national Fair Employment Practices Commission have in moderating prejudice?

Morroe Berger, assistant professor of sociology at Princeton University, in his study of legal controls over group discrimination, **"Equality by Statute"** (Columbia University Press, $3.25), concludes that law has proved a protection for minority groups.

After a careful analysis of the pioneering New York State Law Against Discrimination, he finds that the Ives-Quinn law "has reduced the amount of discrimination in employment and has opened new job opportunities to members of minority groups."

In the wider field, beyond employment, Mr. Berger sums up this way: "Proper legal controls fortify the unprejudiced and the believers in fair play. They also weaken the position of those who discriminate whether out of some deep personality disorder or merely to conform to the values of their own groups."

This is a useful book for legislators as well as for students of intergroup relations. —L. L. L. G.

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YEAR OF THE LONG AUTUMN

(*Continued from page 9*)

moment of Miss Ferber's turning Texas into the national scapegoat for failings that are actually countrywide, the greatest number of Texas writers in history were getting published with uncannily sophisticated books, books that in an all too ungentlemanly manner belied Miss Ferber's observations. We would have slapped as many wrists as possible, but Texas is a wide and broad state and our reach is not equal to Miss Ferber's.

But let us be kind and serviceable. For all those millions of readers who seem presently to be taking delight in Miss Ferber's skinning of Texas, we offer the fact that you can find more of the same entertaining criticisms of the state made in books by novelists David Westheimer ("Summer on the Water"), William Goyen ("The House of Breath"), Robert Rylee ("The Ring and the Cross"), Donald Joseph ("Long Bondage"), George Williams ("The Blind Bull"), and a good many other Texas writers, not to mention Frank Dobie, George Sessions Perry, and Walter Prescott Webb.

Both Dobie and Webb, the two most eminent names among Texas writers, were on the autumn lists, Webb with "The Great Frontier" and Dobie with the "The Mustangs"—a book filled, like Tom Lea's "The Wonderful Country," with a very Southwestern kind of mystic feeling and wisdom.

Tom Lea's "The Wonderful Country" was a superior survey of the Western experience, re-created as though Lea himself had been an active participant in the past events of which he wrote. It was a celebration, however, of something timeless: a willingness to meet destiny with arms wide open.

In the four other chief Texas novels of the year, sex came to Texas writing. Madison Cooper's "Sironia, Texas," longest novel in American history, panned out as a good publishing gamble in these days of reader preference for digests and books you can fit into a coat pocket. "Sironia" brims with vitality and narrative skill, somehow atoning in breadth for what it lacks in depth. Its candor, placed in the Victorian mood of the early years of the century, will be found, by all who read it attentively, to extend to other domains than just that of sex. John H. Griffin's "The Devil Rides Outside" (published by a brand-new Texas house, Smith's of Fort Worth) exhibited extraordinary sensitivity; the author's point of view that sex equates with sin should make him a candidate to inherit Mauriac's winning of the Nobel Prize. Warren Leslie's "The Best Thing That Ever Happened" was largely a novel of sex awakening; deft and skilled, it was written, in our opinion, without emotion. A "blazing honesty" informs George Williams's lyrical study of Gulf coast life, "The Blind Bull."

IF TEXAS provided the surprise of the year, by the number of books from Texas writers that won national notice, 1952 was one year in which books from foreign countries did not yield much harvest. True to form in establishing this as a veteran's year, Aldous Huxley with his "The Devils of Loudun" provided the chief British contribution, superior to both Joyce Cary's "Prisoner of Grace" and Evelyn Waugh's "Men at Arms." Colette was still the best French importation, and we remind you that her first book appeared in 1900. For a change, the Italian translations seemed less substantial than during the past few years.

Now that we have had our say on 1952, we must in fairness add that to wish to impose some sense of design on such a survey as this automatically means the omission of many excellent books that just will not be carpentered to fit the governing pattern of selection. Not to mention the fact that other books belie the pattern. How include such dissimilar books—those two great bonuses of the year—as Judge Hand's "The Spirit of Liberty" and Anne Frank's "The Diary of a Young Girl." And one would have to create a new category for books on space-travel such as Arthur Clarke's "The Exploration of Space" and the anthology "Across the Space Frontier." These are further facts in proof of a good year, and further proof of any bookman's paramount axiom, namely, that good books equate with a good life.

Since the fate of an artist lies not simply in his natural endowment of artistic superiority but also in the presence of a responsive public, one may assume that there remains in this country a "good" book audience, not indifferent—as some have begun to think—to imaginative literature. Perhaps in 1953 publishers will be more encouraged to go ahead and take a chance on fresh but unproved young talents.

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By Doris Nash Wortman

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. *United States Congress of 1953* (comp.).	83 69 37 39 57 17 101 61 93 24 / 7
B. With "Hall", the school in "Nicholas Nickleby".	113 43 89 38 95 11 103 131 120
C. Victor Herbert operetta in which Nelson Eddy made his movie debut (2 wds.).	128 52 65 78 1 41 32 134 59 149 / 19 40 81 33 13
D. State of being an originator.	145 28 117 34 133 49 46 99 64 91
E. Herbert Hoover's job, 1917-19 (2 wds.).	146 111 137 67 26 9 121 60 92 90 / 6
F. Applicant for admission.	80 72 53 114 29 8 47
G. Vicious pachyderm who walks by himself (2 wds.).	130 152 15 36 2 23 30 97 48 136 / 115 77 85

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
H. *Purchased on a credit account* (3 wds.; colloq.).	139 4 100 45 22 27 151 88 82 50 / 125 70
I. Birthplace of John Bunyan.	119 31 132 144 73 63
J. Another name for Redriff, terminus of Grand Surrey Canal, England.	104 126 138 42 62 98 58 141 147 21 / 124
K. Describing most American college fraternities (comp.).	142 16 105 148 123 66 54 74 129 12 / 84
L. In a priceless way.	76 150 94 87 118 5 106 79 68 56
M. Little pickled fish.	122 153 3 143 112 51 109
N. Valuable product of certain oak trees, esp. in Eastern Europe.	14 44 20 110 25 107 55
O. One of the things a witness swears to tell (3 wds.).	116 86 135 18 75 35 108 71 10 140 / 127 102 96

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

■	■	1 C	2 G	■	3 M	4 H	5 L	6 E	7 A	■	8 F	9 E	10 O	■	11 B	12 K								
■	13 C	14 N	15 G	16 K	17 A	■	18 O	19 Q	20 N	21 J	■	22 H	23 G	24 A	■	25 N								
26 E	27 H	28 D	29 F	30 G	31 I	32 C	■	33 C	34 D	35 O	36 G	37 A	38 B	■	39 A	40 C								
■	41 C	42 J	43 B	44 N	45 H	46 D	47 F	■	48 G	49 D	50 H	51 M	52 C	53 F	54 K	55 N								
56 L	■	57 A	58 J	59 C	60 E	■	61 A	62 J	■	63 I	64 D	65 C	66 K	67 E	■	68 L								
69 A	70 H	71 O	■	72 F	73 I	74 K	75 O	76 L	77 G	78 C	■	79 L	80 F	81 C	82 H	83 A								
84 K	■	85 G	86 O	87 L	88 H	■	89 B	90 E	■	91 D	92 E	93 A	94 L	95 B	■	96 O								
97 G	98 J	■	99 D	100 H	101 A	■	102 O	103 B	■	104 J	105 K	106 L	107 N	108 O	109 M	■								
110 N	111 E	112 M	113 B	■	114 F	115 G	116 O	117 D	118 L	119 I	120 B	121 E	122 M	123 K	124 J	■								
125 H	126 J	127 O	128 C	129 K	130 G	131 B	■	132 I	133 D	134 C	135 O	■	136 G	137 E	138 J	■								
139 H	140 O	141 J	142 K	143 M	144 I	■	145 D	146 E	147 J	148 K	149 C	150 L	151 H	152 G	153 M	■								

Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 26 of this issue.

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SR/ RECORDINGS SECTION

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Why Not Opera in English?

HOWARD DIETZ

Howard Dietz

AFTER "Fledermaus" I decided to make another attempt at opera adaptation and chose "La Bohème," which had no spoken dialogue and was a complete departure from the experiences of musical comedy. Rudolf Bing warned me that he had no need for an English version of a work that everybody seemed to like in the original Italian, and which always played to full houses at the Metropolitan. But by this time I had already made a contract with Ricordi, the owner of all Puccini copyrights, and decided to finish it without the assurance that it would be performed. One day I sang it all for Mr. Bing—in my rich guttural—and he agreed to present it in the same season with the Italian, with an identical new physical production. Joseph Mankiewicz was engaged to direct the opera in both languages. The English "Bohème" is in its final rehearsals as I write, and the only opinion I have heard from Mr. Bing so far is that the singing of the cast is an improvement over my original audition.

The juxtaposition of these Italian and English versions of a favorite opera may have quickened interest in a long-existing controversy. Before the curtain has risen, a few negative articles have already appeared—one of them in *The Saturday Review* [Nov. 29], by Dale Warren, who neither likes nor sees the need for opera in English unless it is written in English in the first place. He considers the very idea of transposition an "artistic fallacy" and a commercial failure. Germans may like their Italian operas in German and the Italians their German operas in Italian, but when he hears these foreign works performed in his own language "the magic is dispelled, the romance shattered, the illusion destroyed." He compares the notion of opera in English to the late Isadora Duncan's interpretive dancing to a Beethoven symphony. He quotes passages, such as Rodolfo's "Chi son? Son' una poeta," as defiant of paraphrase. His only concession is to operas in the comic spirit. These, he believes, may be amenable to translation because they have much in them that is "conversational."

What appears to be the hard core of musical opinion inclines to Mr. Warren's view. This hard core is composed of many professional singers and conductors as well as many boxholders and regular subscribers to the opera and other earnest devotees of the art. They seem to like their operas served up in the recipe provided by the original chefs. The music has a better taste to them when the words are imported. For myself—representing the soft core who go to the opera occasionally—I am more apt to like what I understand than what I don't understand. I do not appreciate the musical setting of operatic dialogue when I do not know the meaning of the words that have been set to music. I agree with John Mason Brown that "every opera is too long except 'Carmen'."

The solution to the problem for all concerned would be an authentic English opera. Unfortunately, most of the qualified composers have been Italian, German, French, and Russian, who prefer to design their musical phrases around words which they understand. With the exception of the late George Gershwin, or such others as Virgil Thomson and Gian-Carlo Menotti, we haven't developed any musical geniuses who are in love with our

Howard Dietz, translator of the Metropolitan Opera's "Fledermaus" and "Bohème" productions, has collaborated in the writing of a variety of Broadway shows, the latest of which was "Inside U.S.A."

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great poetic language. As a result our singers are trained either at home or abroad in a European tradition and the entire musical atmosphere is conditioned by winds from the continent of Europe. These singers do not like to sing in English because they were not trained in English. Having learned many roles in Italian, German, or French, they are resistant to a change of language even though the change in many cases may be an improvement on the original.

IN the face of this opposition it is only natural that our accomplishments in English adaptation should be at best doubtful. Few verse writers will take time out for a long job, only to brave the resistance encountered on submission of the work and during rehearsals. But even the doubtful English texts that are now being used by small opera companies have stimulated interest in opera, and lyric singers are beginning to achieve an impact on their audiences which has been largely reserved for the tour de force of coloraturas. Understanding makes for appreciation. On the Met's "Fledermaus" tour, people came for hundreds of miles on wintry nights to hear a great company sing in English.

It is true that the original foreign words are those the composer set to music, and music is more richly projected when it sings what it was meant to sing. But in many cases it is also true that there is room for improvement on the original words which are not always perfect in the standard librettos. Even great composers have not been infallible in setting some of the well-chosen phrases. English adaptation can make the librettos as good or better. The music can be made more enjoyable because opera music is music that is inseparable from the words.

The concession that Mr. Warren makes to operas in the comic spirit is that they are "conversational." By "conversational" I assume he means prosaic and unimportant. The characters in these works are apt to use cliché phrases, the equivalent of "How's tricks?," "What's cooking?," and "Long time no see." But I have not found that "conversational" exchange is exclusive to the more humorous operas. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that there is more poetry and less prose in the so-called light works than in those operas with large tonnage. The true reason for the adaptation of these frothier items has a more significant bearing on Mr. Warren's entire argument. It is that audiences do not laugh at jokes delivered in a foreign tongue. Is it not logical that if they do not laugh when they are supposed to laugh in the merrier works, they may not be sighing when they are supposed to sigh in the heavier ones? There does not seem to be any yardstick of distinction in the relative merits of light and heavy operas *per se*. There is only good and bad.

Certain operas do not lend themselves to adaptation or translation. When a work is perfect in its original form, when the language has the handwriting of an individual poet, it had better be left alone. I would shudder at the idea of foreign adaptations of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas even though they are light works which Mr. Warren might call "conversational." But truly great librettos—from the poetic point of view—are exceptional, and even the excellent Verdi and Puccini texts, written by able craftsmen, lend themselves to English adaptation without generating the guilt of an artistic crime.

There are many passages in Italian operas which are so well written and wedded to the music as to defy paraphrase. In these cases I believe paraphrase should be avoided and a new, but not unrelated, idea substituted which the adapter may feel would have been acceptable to the composer. Allowing for this free exchange of thought, this liberal transaction in the currency coined by another, it is possible for lines to emerge in English with felicitous result. The words with open vowels must be sought to match the happy terminations of the Italian. There are always English words waiting to be found which will give the troubled singer a measure of comfort.

Translating an opera literally is an assignment more difficult than the most difficult of crossword puzzles. During the tenure of copyright an editorial tyranny is practised by the original librettist, but as time goes on and the copyrights on standard operas expire, there is a tendency for the adapter to feel freer in his approach. Messrs. Grist and Pinkerton, who translated "La Bohème" in literal fashion, deserve the sympathy of anyone who has attempted a similar assignment. Such phrases as "Una terrible tosse" may be all right in Italian where the indigenous meaning of the words may qualify the impact of their sound. But I simply cannot believe that the most majestic musical theme in the opera should be employed on the coughing symptom of a dread malady in terms that are virtually medical. Though the dire struggle between life and death should lend itself to tragic song, the words should be employed in a more oblique and pictorial manner.

THE purpose of this article is not to explain what I have been trying to do in the English adaptation of "La Bohème." What I have been trying to do will explain itself. I am merely trying to suggest that the critical audience will be doing a service if it approaches opera in English without antagonism. Those who know their operas thoroughly and who are conversant in many languages have no need for opera in English. It may well be a distraction to them. But this category includes a very few. While writing the English "La Bohème," I have discussed certain passages with those who have a complete acquaintance with the music, but even they could

(*Continued on page* 56)

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Cuenod: Musician & Singer

ROLAND GELATT

FROM Noel Coward to François Couperin yawns a stylistic gulf that few performers would attempt to cross, but it has held no terrors for Hugues Cuenod, a Swiss singer in his mid-forties who is a prolific recorder and one of the most versatile musicians of our day. Though he is now on his sixth visit to this country, Cuenod is best known here through his recordings—in prewar years as a participant in the notable Monteverdi and Brahms albums made under Nadia Boulanger's direction, more recently in a succession of LP's embracing a wide range of repertoire from the sixteenth century to the twentieth. They are all the recordings of an individualist: Cuenod's voice—with its nasal, reedy timbre, its almost instrumental projection—bears no resemblance to the standard opera-house tenor, nor is the music in which he specializes anchored to the usual vocal moorings. They are the recordings too of a distinctive musical personality, a re-creative artist on equally good terms with the religious mysticism of Heinrich Schütz and the contemporary buffoonery of Jean Françaix.

An indolent disposition started Hugues Cuenod on his career as a singer. "When I began to sing," he acknowledged at a recent interview, "it was because I wanted to make music. My first impulse was to become a pianist, but I was lazy and I discovered that while piano students had to practise five or six hours a day, singers managed with two or three. In fact, they were expressly forbidden to sing more than that for fear of straining their voices. So I gave up my plans for the piano and concentrated instead on singing. I had no voice to speak of, and sang like a worm. My friends kept asking me why I bothered to take lessons. They thought it a hopeless waste of time. But I was having fun and I refused to be discouraged. After three years in the Basle Conservatory I went to Vienna to study with Mme. Singer-Burian, a strict exponent of the old Marchesi school of voice production. I arrived in Vienna a pale bass-baritone, but by the time I had left two years later my voice had risen to its present range." Cuenod is usually identified as a tenor, although he sometimes sings as low-pitched a role as Pelléas and occasionally performs a high counter-tenor part, like the Evangelist in the "St. Matthew Passion."

By the age of twenty-five Cuenod was installed in Paris, equipped with a well-formed singing technique and ready to make music as he wanted. But he had also to make money, and as no one asked him to perform Bach or Couperin he took whatever jobs came his way. For years the tall, loose-jointed tenor sang in musical comedies and night clubs, at funerals and public ceremonies. Looking back upon it, he feels this was invaluable training. "It taught me not to be dull." Since Cuenod spoke perfect English (with a clipped accent that betrays his part-British ancestry) and had a hankering to see New York, he tried out for a small part in Noel Coward's "Bittersweet." The autumn of 1929 found him at the Ziegfeld Theatre on Sixth Avenue playing the very minor role of Bertram Sellick. "Altogether I sang in 345 performances of 'Bittersweet.' When the run was over I decided that I had had enough of musical comedy and that I had better begin to make a name for myself in serious musical circles."

Back in Paris he met Nadia Boulanger, an encounter which he terms the "decisive step" in his career. Boulanger recognized how well suited Cuenod's vocal quality and musical style were to the demands of early music, and she soon had him singing the solos in Bach cantatas for her lectures at the Ecole Normale. Although he never took lessons from Boulanger, in the sense of the usual pupil-teacher relationship, he acknowledges that she exercised by far the greatest influence on his musical development. Performing Bach cantatas with the celebrated Boulanger eventually led to similar engagements elsewhere, and before too long the sandy-haired singer found himself out of the realm of operetta and busy at the kind of music-making that lay closest to his heart.

Hugues Cuenod: "I wanted to make music."

Cuenod's first recordings were a direct result of his early visit to New York as a member of the "Bittersweet" company. With all his 345 performances, he somehow found time to visit Harlem and to develop a fondness for Negro spirituals. On his return to France he regaled his friends with renditions of the spirituals he had learned, endowing them with the most authentic Southern accent he could muster. In time the French HMV company got wind of these private performances and asked Cuenod to make a record of three Negro spirituals. It was first issued in the mid-Thirties as HMV K 7551. Cuenod still treasures a review which hails him as "a superlative new Negro tenor."

The recent efflorescence of Cuenod recordings began three years ago when the Bach Guild recorded him in several cantatas. Soon thereafter came a variety of LP's for a variety of companies, with the accent largely on music of the past. Couperin's "First Tenebrae" (Allegro) and a collection of English songs of the Renaissance (Westminster) are two outstanding issues featuring this singer. Due for imminent release is a new series of recordings, for American Decca, under Nadia Boulanger's direction in which Cuenod again takes part. In his future plans the stress is more on modern music. For American Columbia he is about to record Stravinsky's new "Cantata," with the composer conducting, and next spring, for London, he is scheduled to sing the part of Gonsalve, the prolix love-sick poet, in Ravel's "L'Heure Espagnole."

It can be seen from the foregoing that there is hardly a company in business for whom Hugues Cuenod has not recorded at one time or another. This multiplicity of affiliations does not bother him in the least, and he shies away from an exclusive contract. "Though I earn my living by music," he explains, "I am not a professional who thinks primarily of business. I prefer the epicurean way, to choose what is most interesting and musically rewarding. My great aim in life is to remain an amateur—but a good amateur, an amateur in spirit, with the skill of a professional."

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HITS AND MISSES

THIS is an era of jazz pedagogy. The colleges are stuffed with jazz courses; Mr. George Avakian is lecturing from such fashionable pulpits as New York's Cosmopolitan Club; Professor Marshall Stearns organizes each year a sort of jazz Bayreuth; and numerous players have taken to expounding the art, with verbal comment, at their given instruments. I have before me an LP called "From Barrelhouse to Bop: A History of Jazz Piano" narrated and played by John Mehegan, with Charles Mingus on the string bass (Perspective PR-1). Now, with pedagogy the great danger always is that a good deal of the letter of the subject will be conveyed, and altogether too little of the spirit. I think something of the sort occurs here, and yet Mr. Mehegan is a very fine pianist indeed, a persuasive talker, and may be recommended on many counts.

I gather from the notes that he has taught at Juilliard since 1947, has lectured at Brandeis and Tanglewood's Music Inn, and that he is an active public syncopator as well as a teacher. His record jacket displays an interesting genealogical diagram of jazz pianists, and he himself plays and discusses samples of the styles of Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, Pinetop Smith, Earl Hines, Fats Waller, Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, Bob Zurke, Cy Walter, and George Shearing. It is pointed out that "these are not in any way note-for-note arrangements or copies of recordings, but improvisations that any of these ten great jazz pianists might have sat down and improvised themselves."

Mr. Mehegan's spoken comment seems to me in the main highly sensible. I would not agree with him that what he calls the Dixieland school (including Joe Sullivan and Jess Stacy) produced no great piano soloists; I am less impressed than he is by the undeniable opulence of Art Tatum's work; and I miss any reference to the man who seems to me by far the most remarkable of modern jazz pianists—Lennie Tristano. So far as Mr. Mehegan's own playing is concerned, it is obviously impossible to expect any one person to capture the nuances of all ten of the pianists under consideration. I miss from his Earl Hines, for instance, the enormous rhythmic momentum of that great man, and from Mr. Mehegan's Teddy Wilson the jeweled grace of right-hand invention. But one can't have everything, and the main point is that Mr. Mehegan is an excellent teacher and pianist. I would simply wish the student to keep bearing in mind the originals—they can be heard in any well-equipped phonograph shop.

It is John Philip Sousa season. There is a charming (yes, that is the word) new movie about him called "Stars and Stripes Forever," in which Clifton Webb gives an interpretation of the man which may not be Sousa but is full of grace and delight, accompanied by a fine resonance of the great marches. It is rapidly being forgotten that while Sousa was a world figure of an eminence rivaling Adelina Patti or King C. Gillette, he had a personal passion for intimate ballads, being himself the composer of, among others, "Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?" But as with the sometime hymnist Sir Arthur Sullivan, the man's musical subconscious kept thrusting up and taking over and, try as he would to think of parlor plaints, his ears boomed with a music louder than the surf. The movie does comic justice to all this. An excellent LP, taken from the sound track, includes the major pieces as played by Alfred Newman and the Fox studio orchestra (M-G-M E176). The program consists of Sousa's own "Stars and Stripes Forever," "Washington Post," "Semper Fidelis," and "El Capitan," and in addition "Light Cavalry Overture," "Turkey in the Straw," "Hail to the Chief," "Dixie," and a rich rendition of "Battle Hymn of the Republic." This music would have given Theodore Roosevelt the bulliest of impressions, and in the same mail comes another Sousa program by the distinguished Edwin Franko Goldman band of New York. The eight marches include the four already mentioned plus "High School Cadets," "U.S. Field Artillery," "The Glory of the Yankee Navy," and "The Thunderer." Goldman of New York approaches Sousa with a sparer, brisker spirit than Newman of Hollywood. The difference rather suggests that between the reedy eighteenth-century organ and the luxuriant pipes of latter-day church instruments. I rather imagine Sousa's own tack was closer to Mr. Newman's, but Mr. Goldman's agility and polish are of high appeal.

John Mehegan—a persuasive talker.

THE Dixieland shelves continue to bulge. From Florida comes an LP of Preacher Rollo and the Five Saints called "Dixieland Doin's" (M-G-M E174). This admirable little band, with Marie Marcus on the piano and Tony Parenti on the clarinet, have gotten around, among other things, to "Save Your Confederate Money, Boys (The South Shall Rise Again)." The Firehouse Five Plus Two, who can be desperately picturesque at times, and warmly musical at others, are in the latter strain in "Lonesome Railroad Blues" (Good Time Jazz 73). The young shouter Claire Austin of California, recently this department's obsession in the way of hot contraltos, is on her job again with Turk Murphy's band in "Cakewalkin' Babies" (Good Time Jazz 75). And the rival Bob Scobey equipage are represented not only by a new "Peoria" and "All the Wrongs You've Done to Me" (Good Time Jazz 74), but also by an LP including eight of their earlier recordings, with the veteran Negro clarinetists Albert Nicholas and Darnell Howard (Good Time Jazz LP-9). The new record features the unusual combination of Scobey himself, on the single trumpet, and three trombones. Murphy and Scobey, of course, belong historically with Pierre Monteux among the high musical adornments of the Pacific Coast. Or any coast.

We know next to nothing about Flamenco guitar, but can feel the rigor and metallic brilliance of Mario Escudero and Alberto Velez playing behind the singer Pedro Jiminez on the LP "'El Pili' Flamenco" (Esoteric 2001). The excellent program notes stress the fact that this ethnologically complex music—Moorish, Byzantine, Jewish, and gypsy—is played with the strictest classical guitar technique. It would seem to be, and has many suggestions to make about the sources of Manuel de Falla.

—WILDER HOBSON.

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Ten by Beethoven

BEETHOVEN: *Sonatas for Piano and Violin. Artur Balsam, piano, and Joseph Fuchs, violin.* (Decca DX-150, $25.)

THE vogue for complete editions induced by the LP process has much to be said for it, but like all "vogues" it is subject to review from time to time. One of those times tends to involve any cycle of Beethoven, whether sonatas, symphonies, or even quartets—for the span of music encompassed in his literature is so broad that few performers or groups can be expected to be equally adept with all of it.

In the current instance the problem is complicated by the nature of the works themselves, which begin with productions in which the concept is, certainly, piano with violin obbligato, and proceed, through some deviations, to works in which the scope of music for both instruments is vastly expanded. The violinist with the temperament and bravura style for the "Kreutzer" or the introspection for the Opus 96 is not likely to have the delicacy for the Opus 12; likewise the pianist. We can all name "exceptions," but they scarcely abound.

Consistent with his reputation for solidity and musical judgment, Fuchs is a more satisfying player—to this taste—of the later works than he is of the earlier ones. Among the "early" ones I include the gloriously fresh "Spring" Sonata, which flows a little coolly along emotional lines strongly channeled rather than luring us into an occasional eddy or whirlpool of feeling. The strong A minor of Opus 30 is powerfully projected, as is the fine C minor of the same set; but always with a tendency to the literally faithful rather than the strongly temperamental.

As specimens of violinistic art, the collection is testimony to Fuchs's enduringly high standards in tone, articulation, intonation; it also shows Balsam as something more than an extremely deft accompanist, though that "something more" does not include all the resource required for this particular task. Decca's engineers have done an outstanding work, in fidelity and balance, and the inclusion of the complete musical text is a signal service to the purchaser. —I. K.

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THE OTHER SIDE

(IMPORTED RECORDINGS)

LONDON.

THE second LP release of HMV, Columbia, and Parlophone has materialized in time for Christmas and it contains no fewer than six complete stage works (not counting "Call Me Madam"). These range from the intimacy of the London Mermaid Theatre and Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" to the expanse of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus and "Die Meistersinger," and the itinerary takes in as well Paris ("Carmen" with Solange Michel and Jobin), Rome (the Gigli-Caniglia "Tosca"), Milan ("Il Barbiere"), and Vienna ("Die Zauberflöte" under Karajan).

The most newsworthy set in the new list is HMV's "Barber of Seville," which, believe it or not, is the first complete recording of this most popular of comic operas ever to be issued in this country! (The early Columbia set, with Stracciari and Borgioli, only reached our domestic catalogue in abridged form.). This performance was recorded in Milan under the direction of Tullio Serafin and is notable above all for the wonderful Rosina of Victoria de los Angeles. She sings the part as originally written, showing herself to be more mezzo than soprano, as many of us have long suspected. It is a performance full of sparkle and mischief in which each note and every word is made to tell; moreover, her singing in the Cavatina and in the Lesson Scene is quite ravishing and makes one long to hear her in "La Cenerentola." The new "Barbiere" also boasts a charming Almaviva (Nicola Monti), the fruitiest of Basilios (Rossi-Lemeni), and an excellent Bartolo (Melchiorre Luise). It is little short of tragic that no better Figaro could have been found, for Gino Bechi shouts his way through the part in the most vulgar and insensitive fashion; no sane person would have put his trust in this coarse fellow's tact and discretion! Measured in decibels, his is a great performance, but on any other scale of values it is a blot in an otherwise first-class issue.

Among the remainder of the new LP releases we find a highly charged "Sacre du Printemps" by Igor Markevitch and the Philharmonia Orchestra; Schubert's four Impromptus, Opus 90, played by the late Artur Schnabel; Moura Lympany playing Schumann's "Etudes Symphoniques," Opus 13, and Franck's "Variations Symphoniques"; the Primrose-Beecham performance of "Harold in Italy"; Chopin's B minor Sonata, Opus 58, from Malcuzynski; an exciting "El Amor Brujo" by the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra under Ataulfo Argenta with Ana-Maria Iriarte as the vocalist; and an excellent disc by Segovia containing Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra as well as some delightful solo pieces by Ponce, Torroba, and Turina.

HMV's second release of seven-inch 45-rpm discs shows stronger leanings in the "popular" direction than did the first; out of a total of twenty-five titles no fewer than five are devoted to Mario Lanza, who appears to have an extremely wide following in this country. Much amusement has been caused by the transfer to 45-rpm of a disc which was recorded in the Twenties and which at one time was to be

found in nearly every phonograph-owning home in Great Britain. It is Mendelssohn's "Hear my prayer" ("Oh, for the wings of a dove"), sung by Master Ernest Lough and the Choir of the Temple Church, London. In a recent interview on television Mr. Lough, now approaching forty, told what it is like to have been a world-famous boy soprano: apparently he still receives boxes of candy from enthusiastic admirers!

There are still quite a number of 78-rpm discs among the December releases, particularly on HMV. Samuel Barber's setting of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" is sung with taste and intelligence by John Langstaff, supported by the Hirsch Quartet, but it can hardly erase memories of the beautiful performance by the composer himself, which, unfortunately, was never issued over here. Peter Warlock's "The Curlew" (words by W. B. Yeats), one of the finest works by this gifted musician who committed suicide in 1930 at the age of thirty-six, has not been recorded since the early days of the National Gramophonic Society, but now the British Council has sponsored a new issue on three HMV discs where, under the direction of Elizabeth Poston, it is most sensitively performed by René Soames (tenor), Geoffrey Gilbert (flute), Leon Goossens (cor anglais), and the Aeolian String Quartet. It is to be hoped that we shall soon have this fine recording on LP.

Further contributions from this company include an attractive version of Fauré's "Pavanne," Opus 50, by the London Chamber Orchestra and Chorus under Anthony Bernard, two Mozart overtures—"Figaro" and "Impresario"—played with considerable skill but not very much refinement by Kubelik and the Philharmonia, and Mathilda's Cavatina from Act II of Rossini's "Guillaume Tell," finely sung by Joan Hammond, who atones for her somewhat imperfect French pronunciation by including the preceding recitative.

On Columbia there is an exciting, and excellently recorded, performance of Moussorgsky's "A Night on the Bare Mountain" by the Philharmonia Orchestra under Paul Kletzki (with the "Russlan and Ludmilla" Overture on the spare side), and a charming, if modest, novelty in the Romance for Harmonica with Strings and Piano by Vaughan Williams. This short work (it goes onto one twelve-inch record) was written for Larry Adler, who has recorded it and who gave its first performance at last summer's "Proms" (where it had to be encored). The Swedish baritone Sigurd Björling, supported by the Philharmonia under Wilhelm Schuechter, is heard to fine advantage in the great monologue from Act I of Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman," while on Parlophone Karl Haas and the London Baroque Ensemble give a stylish and workmanlike account of Bach's Concerto in F major for harpsichord, two recorders, and strings, the composer's own fascinating arrangement of his fourth "Brandenburg" Concerto. From Parlophone, too, comes a record by that brilliant young *enfant-terrible* of the London stage, Peter Ustinov, which should bring much laughter to musical households over Christmas. On one side, entitled "Phoney Folk-lore," he guys various

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national styles somewhat in the manner of the great Betove (I liked particularly the "Song of the young Russian peasant who has been betrayed by his tractor"); on the other, called "Mock-Mozart," he gives us "Die Zauberposaune," a "newly discovered Mozart opera in one act" complete with recitatives, arias, ensembles, etc., all the voices and orchestral instruments (with the exception of a harpsichord) being provided by the larynx of the irrepressible Mr. Ustinov.

—THOMAS HEINITZ.

* * *

PARIS.

AN important and long-range recording project has been initiated here in Paris which will result in a great anthology of solo vocal music of all countries, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, occupying twenty or more LP records. The man responsible for this plan is a young Norwegian musicologist-composer now living in Paris, Arne Dørumsgaard. For this new anthology Dørumsgaard has collected about five hundred songs, from Walther von der Vogelweide through the sons of Bach, and has composed new accompaniments for all of them. What we have in his settings is an important demonstration of the way the piano *should* be used in the accompaniment of early music: not as a poor substitute for the lute or the harpsichord, but as an element to be treated as a medium in itself. With the inevitable prominence given to the piano in Dørumsgaard settings there comes a feeling of the best elements in chamber music, a sense of true collaboration between singer and pianist. One particularly lovely setting I heard was of a sacred song by Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach, worked out as a kind of chorale-prelude with the vocal line intricately woven into the accompanying figures. This appears, with other songs by K.P.E. Bach and his father, on the first release in the anthology, an LP by Flagstad with Gerald Moore.

The recordings of these songs will be done in Paris and in London, partly by HMV and partly by Decca-London. Among the artists who will appear in the project are Flagstad, Souzay, Ferrier, Richard Lewis, and Aksel Schiøtz. It is planned that Schiøtz will record, next January in Paris, a large group of songs by the Swedish composer Carl Bellman (1740-1795). Anyone who treasures (as I do) the two or three Danish HMV's of Bellman songs by Schiøtz will gladly receive these tidings of joy.

The forthcoming French HMV list includes the first recording generally available of a major work by the Italian dodecaphonist Luigi Dallapiccola. His "Canto di Prigionia," which was heard at the Paris festival last May, has been recorded in Rome by the chorus and orchestra of the Accademia Santa Cecilia conducted by Igor Markevitch. Dallapiccola's appearance at Tanglewood last summer seems to have occasioned the long overdue awakening of interest for his music in the United States, and this new LP should see eventual American issue. The music is not meant for diversion's sake, but is a powerful expression by a gifted composer. The recording, by the way, was made under the auspices of UNESCO.

Pathé-Marconi is presently engaged in recording a performance of Ravel's "L'Heure Espagnole" at the Opéra-Comique with Cluytens, and the results so far are most beguiling. At another recent session a work often discussed but seldom played received its first recording, Florent Schmitt's "Psalm 47" for soprano, chorus, and large orchestra. Schmitt seems in this work to be more under the influence of Central European post-romantic megalomania, but it's an impressive work, nevertheless, and the performance by Denise Duval, the Elizabeth Brasseur Chorale, and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra under Georges Tzipine keeps to a steady pace through the underbrush.

After a busy survey of the French recording industry it's like a restful walk in the country to spend an afternoon with Mme. Louise Dyer of

(*Continued on page* 54)

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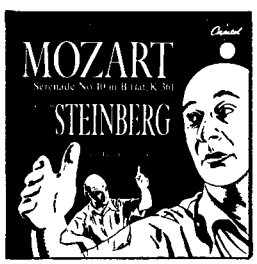

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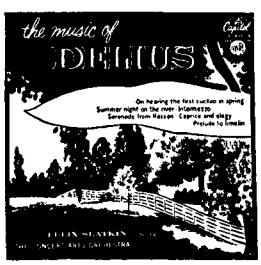

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Unredeemed "Ruins"

BEETHOVEN: *"Ruins of Athens." Walter Goehr conducting the Netherlands Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, with Annie Woudt, soprano, and David Hollestelle, baritone.* (Concert Hall CHS 1158, $5.95.)

IF Concert Hall can afford the luxury of providing us with listening introduction to certain minor works of Beethoven which have always had a curiosity interest though scant standing in the concert hall, we shall welcome them one by one, though not guaranteeing to like them. Certainly such a disc as this has a place in a library, or in a music school, where it gives life to the inanimate notes of the same work in the printed "Ausgabe." Other values, however, have to be considered where home consumption is the objective.

This seems to be one of a number of commissions Beethoven executed because he prefered to live well rather than badly, but it did not draw from him any consequential music. "It" was a kind of literary satire by Kotzebue which begins on Mt. Olympus with Minerva given leave to visit Athens. She invites Mercury to go along, but he says the place is not what it used to be. Minerva persists, only to find that her advisor was right. Where, then, does culture flourish, she asks? Only in Budapest—where, strangely enough, the first performance of "Ruins of Athens" took place in 1812.

It is hardly from such stuff that enduring masterpieces are created; and Beethoven did not exceed the possibilities it provided. The overture has some merit, and certain episodes related to the Olympian atmosphere have character and dignity. But, in this context, the famous march is plainly a satire, with its "Turkish" overtones. The composer responded to other situations with music of relative distinction, but it hardly hangs together.

The performance has consistent merit, especially in the intelligent direction of Goehr and the singing of Hollestelle, a baritone new to me but possessed of a pliable voice, well used. Good orchestral playing and expert engineering. —I. K.

Opera Roundup

IT WAS on Christmas Eve 1928 that I first heard Verdi's "Forza del Destino." That was also the first time I heard Claudia Muzio. The coincidence of the two has always given me an interest in the opera which subsequent Muzio-less productions have not warranted. Yet this first of the final five ("Forza," "Don Carlo," "Aïda," "Otello," and "Falstaff") is by no means dependent upon its soprano for ultimate success. She must be good, but her absence from the stage in Act III and half of Act IV leaves a lot up to the rest of the cast.

In the latest "Forza" to achieve LP completion (Urania URLP 226, $18.50) a solid cast is on hand. Adriana Guerrini's Leonora is the best work we have heard from her on records. The voice is steadier, the pitch more consistently accurate. Her style is sound. Yet her voice is still unattractive to these ears. Don Alvaro is well sung by Giuseppe Campora, the excellent Cavaradossi of London's new "Tosca." Anselmo Colzani is a good routine Don Carlo. Any cast that includes Fernando Corena is thereby strengthened. This young bass-baritone has quickly become noted for his fine musicianship and true style. He can already be heard as the King of Egypt, the Sacristan, Don Pasquale, and several other fine characters. He is questionably advertised as an "exclusive artist" for one company since some of his best work is divided between two. His Melitone in the present set is a model far surpassing that of the Met's present incumbent in the part. But Giuseppe Modesti gives the Padre little nobility and less richness of sound. Miriam Pirazzini's Preziosilla is vigorous, but the part demands something like—indeed very like—Ebe Stignani, and there seems to be only one of those around.

For excellent fidelity in sound, and for Parodi's good reading of the score, Urania's set is admirable. You may remember Cetra's cast, with Caniglia, Masini, Stignani, Tagliabue, and Pasero—which is some lineup. But this is a brand new recording and as such has a liveness of sound, plus some fine singing, to make it highly desirable.

When Mary Garden strode onto the stage as Thaïs in the second scene of Massenet's opera, a sheaf of crimson roses on her left arm, and her right arm outstretched in a gesture of which no one else ever seemed capable, to announce to the adorers about her, "C'est Thaïs," her pronouncement was not a statement of the obvious, but an invitation to gather around and worship. What's more, the invitation never failed to pass beyond the footlights and reach into the minds of all the males in the audience, who—perhaps unwillingly dragged to the opera—never seemed to object to staying once Garden arrived.

But every memory of the opera "Thaïs" is a visual one of Garden. According to accounts, neither Farrar nor Jeritza, who sang it sixteen and seventeen times respectively at the Met, could create the mood of the Alexandrian courtesan who was universally irresistible. Take away the presence and animating power of a Garden, put "Thaïs" on records, and you have nothing but Massenet's windy spaces.

An apparently faithful account of the Paris Opéra's present best foot forward for "Thaïs" is now available (Urania URLP 227, $18.50). Géori-Boué, remembered for her Marguerite in the complete "Faust" by Beecham, defends the title role in her brilliant but unyielding manner. Thaïs is a girl who knows how to yield and should be able to do so. Géori-Boué is effective in the Mirror Scene, which is the dramatic high point of the set. Her work in the final duet is shrill and ineffectual, lacking the optional high notes, and yipping the alternates. Roger Bourdin, the Valentin of the "Faust" set, is a good Athanael, but the lack of musical stuff is too much for him as for everyone else. Georges Sebastian directs the Opéra chorus and orchestra. Bright note: Jean Giraudeau is admirable as Nicias, where he had failed as the Enée of Berlioz's "Trojans." If you pine for "Thaïs," here you are.

—PAUL HUME.

* * *

THOUGH we have not yet had the reissue of the Toscanini broadcast "Fidelio" yearned for when the first complete version of the score appeared on LP in the summer of 1950, we now have another studio edition, which is a shorter period of time for a duplication of this reasonably esoteric work than might have been anticipated. It comes from Vienna on the label of Vox (Set 7793, $17.85), with Karl Böhm conducting a cast that includes such sturdy performers as Paul Schoeffler (Pizarro), Hilde Konetzni (Leonore), Torsten Ralf (Florestan),

Paul Hume is music critic for the Washington Post.

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Irmgard Seefried (Marzelline), and Peter Klein (Jacquino).

I would not describe this as a more than moderately satisfying version of "Fidelio" in terms of such live ones of the past I have heard with Lotte Lehmann (Richard Strauss conducting) or Kirsten Flagstad (Bruno Walter conducting)—I did not hear the Toscanini broadcast—but it is sufficiently superior to its LP predecessor (on Oceanic) to merit a qualified endorsement for those who have till now been "Fidelio"-less. If Konetzni is hardly at ease in her singing of "Abscheulicher" she does get it out, finally, on pitch and almost in time, which is more than can be said for Margarete Bäumer, the Leonore of the Oceanic issue. Seefried, if noticeably not the sweet-voiced singer she has been on other recordings, is not plagued by the tremolo which marred the work of Ursula Engert in the earlier version. Of the men, Ralf is an outstanding Forestan, Schoeffler an excellent Pizarro, Herbert Alsen an able Rocco, and Klein a satisfactory Jacquino.

So much for vocal virtue. Taking all the evidence together, the direction of Böhm suggests a tape of a radio performance, with not too much atmosphere or careful musical preparation. A forthright blob in the horn mars the playing of the "Fidelio" Overture with which the work begins, and there are moments elsewhere that could have profited from re-recording. A particular virtue of the Oceanic issue—remarkably clear delivery of the *spoken* German text and a serious effort to create a sense of drama-in-progress—is not paralleled in the Vox. Some of the text is abbreviated, and the lines are "read" as if they were, in fact, being read. On the other hand, the Böhm version includes, at the appropriate place (in the Mahler tradition) before the final scene, a well-played version of the "Leonore No. 3" Overture. The Vox processing is decidedly variable, some of the solo material being excellent in clarity and balance, such a duet as "O namenlose Freude" distant from the mike and with hardly audible orchestral background.

For even the best-versed music lovers, Mozart's "Il Re Pastore" has been the enchanting aria "L'amero, saro costante" (with violin obbligato) sung with enthusiasm if not success by sopranos from Melba to Pons. Thanks to Period and the excellent personnel of the Stuttgart Tonstudio (Period set SPL 553, $11.90) it now emerges as a work of consistent felicity, with the lightest, loveliest kind of Mozartian writing spotted with some darker colorations borrowed from Gluck. Since he was not quite twenty when he wrote this work in 1775, the borrowings may be tolerated.

The two soprano parts are well managed by Agnes Giebel (Amyntas) and Kaethe Nentwig (Elisa), whose voices make a charming blend in the duet "Ah, che crudel timor." Miss Giebel sings the famous showpiece of the work creditably, and the sensitive leadership provided by Gustav Lund gives plus-values to the sound abilities of Hetty Plümacher (Tamyris), Werner Hohmann (Agenor), and Albert Weikenmeier (Alexander). Add to other virtues the clean orchestral playing and a quality of sound as resonant and clear as the music itself, and it would appear that "Il Re Pastore" will reign for sometime in this garb.

—I. K.

* * *

BORODIN never could bring himself to finish "Prince Igor," and the opera has suffered for it ever since. He worked at it on and off for a period of eighteen years. When he died, Rimsky-Korsakov gathered up the fragmentary manuscript, put it together as best he could, and with the aid of Glazunov filled in some chinks and executed the orchestration. In view of all this it is no wonder that "Prince Igor" is a work of shreds and patches. But there are in its fabric such glorious patches that one can overlook the lusterless shreds holding the loose garment together.

The opera simmers agreeably through the Prologue and Act I, erupts with a torrent of exotic melody in Act II, and then cools off to a pretty chill finish. But that Second Act—with its climax in the famous Polovtsian Dances—is hard to beat, and it is rendered with full Slavic gusto in Period's new "Prince Igor" (SPL 552, $18.50) emanating from the USSR. I suppose it is profitless to compare every deep-voiced Russian singer to Chaliapin, but there are three of them in "Prince Igor" and the temptation to do so recurs as each one makes an appearance. Messrs. Ivanov, Pirogov, and Reizen are carrying on a worthy tradition. The women singers prompt no such hallowed comparisons; they are competent, but hardly distinguished. Malik-Pashayev, who conducts the chorus and orchestra GABT (that's how the label reads), keeps the score moving along briskly, though he could take a lesson or two from Beecham in the department of finesse. Tolerable recording, far removed from the contemporary best. There's much more sound in a "Prince Igor" orchestral miscellany performed by the Philharmonia Orchestra under Walter Susskind (M-G-M E3008, $4.85), but the cumulative excitement of the opera recording is missing.

—R. G.

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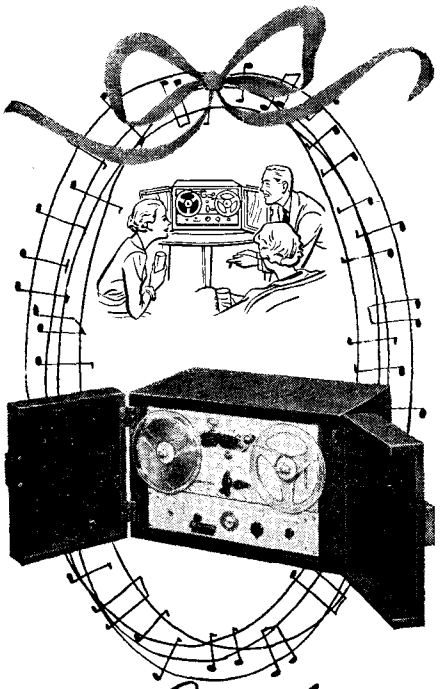

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Recordings in Review

Top Bizet, Top Stokowski

BIZET: *"L'Arlésienne" Suites, Nos. 1 and 2; Symphony in C. Leopold Stokowski conducting his symphony orchestra.* (RCA Victor LM 1706, $5.72.)

AS those acquainted with the broad range of his career are aware, Leopold Stokowski is a conductor with a gift for extracting the most from minutiae—when he puts his mind to it—not exceeded by any specialists of this era, including Beecham and Mengelberg. His treatment of the lovable music Bizet wrote for Daudet's play is the most consistently good I have ever heard, matching the best of isolated excerpts previously offered by Beecham and Mengelberg, while sustaining through eight of the nine episodes Bizet created a kind of spell woven from the capacity to take pains, while giving no pain in return.

What emerges with special clarity here is Stokowski's comprehension of the timbre and individuality in Bizet's scoring, expressed through a group of first-class players. Rhythmic life and melodic zest abound, together with a reasonable approach to the microphone which puts this among the best of RCA's challenges to the high standards of European (and American) recording. The sections include the "Intermezzo" sometimes vocalized to the words "Agnus Dei."

The treatment of the youthful Symphony in C is no less expert, but it seems to me overcomplicated, needlessly fussy, and much less direct in spirit than the one by Artur Rodzinski and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony on Columbia ML 2051. But it is equally well played, and skilfully reproduced.

Furtwängler's Schubert

SCHUBERT: *Symphony in C (No. 7). Wilhelm Furtwängler conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra;* also HAYDN: *Symphony in G (No. 88). The same.* (Decca set 119, $11.70.)

AS one who has followed the phonographic adventures of this inexhaustible work through the minds of Leo Blech, Sir Hamilton Harty, Frederick Stock, Sir Adrian Boult, Bruno Walter, Arturo Toscanini, Willem Mengelberg, and Josef Krips, it seems to me that more of its content is better conveyed in this performance than in any previous one. It certainly lacks the thrust that Toscanini provides to its moments of climax; it does not delve into subtleties as closely as Mengelberg; its temperature, at its highest, is several degrees cooler than Walter's. But it merges merits and demerits in a way more satisfying than any of the others.

Restraint is not a normal tendency of Furtwängler, but it is definitely a characteristic of this performance. The songlike elements which relate the work firmly to the overriding impulse of Schubert's creative existence are given proper prominence; but always with an appreciation of the special qualities of Schubert's orchestral thinking. It is trite to say that a sense of rightness can be conveyed by the way in which the opening page of a work is played. I risk that in saying it nevertheless: from the opening horn call, the mood is just, the sensitivity sharp. It does not deviate thereafter.

The use of three LP sides (one each for movements one and two) may seem extravagant, but the warm flow of sound is its own justification. Actually, the economic factor is leveled off by the inclusion of an exemplary performance of the Haydn No. 88 on the fourth side. Just how recent this recording is I cannot say, but it suggests a technique which values sonority over shock, and a well-balanced room tone more than anything else. The orchestral playing, incidentally, is consistently good.

Californian K.361

MOZART: *Serenade in B flat (K.361). Los Angeles Woodwind Ensemble conducted by William Steinberg.* (Capitol P 8181, $4.98.)

OF the several versions of this seraphic work which have come to the music lover's attention in recent years via recordings (there being virtually no other way in which it may be heard) I still retain the greatest enthusiasm for the very first: the splendid version from Vienna made for HMV under the direction of Wilhelm Furtwängler. Considering its riches in robust sound, it would seem a priority candidate for LP processing in England.

This may seem a round-about approach to the appearance of a new version from California, but it is just in the department of "riches" of sound that it makes one think longingly of the previous standard. It has to do, of course, not with engineering or processing, but with the different ways of playing wind instruments that prevail in various parts of the world. These gentlemen of the West Coast are all splendid virtuosi of the clarinet, oboe, bassoon, French horn, and even basset horn, but the sound they work for is a leaner, less resonant thing than is preferred in Vienna. (Still another kind of sound can be heard in the Koussevitzky-Boston Symphony version which RCA has transferred to LP.)

As a conception, Steinberg's is thoroughly well-studied and sensitive to the texture of the score. However, it does not nearly provide the poetic impulse these musicians require to do the writing justice, which—whether Furtwängler provided it or not—came from the sounds the Vienna players made. In short, this is a thoroughly respectable clean-sounding production, but a little on the prosaic side for the character of the music involved.

Not Our Cup of Sir T.

BERNERS: *"Triumph of Neptune" Suite. Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra;* also ARNELL: *"Punch and the Child." Beecham conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.* (Columbia ML 4593, $5.45.)

IT is not often that we quarrel with the Beecham choice of repertory, for almost anything Sir Thomas chooses to do he makes listenable. For a change, however, we can muster no enthusiasm for either of these works, well as they are played, carefully as they have been reproduced.

I have, on occasion, paid tribute to the wit and ingenuity of Berners's writing in his "Triumph of Neptune"; but opportunities to hear it have been few, generally far between. Reheard now after the rather jolly occasion of last spring when Beecham conducted the live equivalent of this facsimile in Carnegie Hall, it seems decidedly a deflated joke, not robust enough in its essential matter to stand repetition so quickly. One poetic section near the end—"The Frozen Forest"—comes off well, but the rest leaves me indifferent. There is no want of brilliance in the orchestral playing, but the reproduction strikes me as shrill, without the lifelike balance in the best of the orchestra's recent records.

"Punch and the Child" points that fact with the excellence of its English studio sound, the warmth and resonance of the ensemble. Richard Arnell's talent is unmistakable, but it is widely dispersed in this score, with some sections of genuine musical interest,

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others that might have meant more with the balletic action, still others that don't communicate to me at all.

More from Munch

HANDEL-HARTY: *"Water Music"*; also MOZART: *Overture to "Le Nozze di Figaro"*; SCHUMANN: *"Genoveva" Overture. Charles Munch conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra.* (RCA Victor LM 7009, $4.67.)

AT THE risk of offending further our subscribers in the Bay area (both back and front), we must note that this latest recording from the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Charles Munch does not materially alter the status quo. The choice of repertory is hardly happy, the performances do not accord with the legendary repute of the Boston Symphony, and the recorded sound shows no consistency from one piece to the other.

As the longest of the works involved, the Harty transcription of Handel attracts the most attention, but it is not rewarded by the kind of treatment one prefers in this music. The tempi are mostly too fast, accents are nervous, dynamics inclined to be arbitrary. The two overtures make a questionable second side, especially as the "Figaro" is overproduced, soundwise, with a blurry resonance that blankets detail. On the whole, the Schumann comes closest to qualifying for the accolade of "satisfactory," but it is a rather second-rate score which Munch does not improve with an accelerated tempo as the work progresses. RCA Victor's 1953 program for Boston should be: Munch for the Munch repertory. This doesn't seem to be it.

A New Schubert Singer

SCHUBERT: *"Schwanengesang." Petre Munteanu, tenor, with Franz Holetschek, piano.* (Westminster WL 5165, $5.95.)

CONSIDERING the range of these songs—from the infinitely familiar "Ständchen" to the infinitely demanding "Doppelgänger" — it is scarcely surprising that the net impression is one of qualified regard for Munteanu. But the sensitivity of his art, the intelligence of his effort are so keen that one can only deplore the vocal limitations that mark some of his singing as ugly and explosive.

The initial impression, in "Liebesbotschaft," is decidedly pleasant: a light lyric voice, excellent reading of the German text, a sure if not overwhelming response to the Schubertian line. However, one becomes progressively aware, in "Krieger's Ahnung" and the "Serenade," of a tendency for high tones to be louder than they should be, of a bent to a certain kind of head tone which whitens unpleasantly. This is distressing by contrast with Munteanu's mezzo voce, with which he does some delightful things in "In der Ferne" and especially in "Abschied" and "Die Taubenpost." "Der Atlas" is simply too big a song for his voice, and "Der Doppelgänger" calls forth an ugly tone on the climaxing "Gestalt" which mars the effect of his strong conception.

Whether these flaws can be corrected, or minimized by careful microphoning, would be only a guess. Possibly they would not be so conspicuous in less demanding repertory; but his response to this particular challenge has so much virtue one can only regret his weapons are not better forged for the purpose. Holetschek plays beautifully throughout, and the balance of voice and piano is just as it should be. In addition to a good sketch of Munteanu's career (he is a Rumanian by birth) and comments on the songs by David Randolph, the complete German-English text is provided, a thoroughgoing service for which Westminster deserves commendation.

—*Bettmann Archive.*

Josef and Johann Strauss—"dances in the free-wheeling manner."

Josef and Johann

STRAUSS: *"Dorfschwalben aus Osterreich" and other selections. Clemens Krauss conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.* (London LL 683, $5.95.)

THE good news that the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra will be visiting us in '54 will be even better news if the repertory, when announced, includes some of its memorable specialities contained on this disc. I refer not so much to the lengthy "Dorfschwalben" of Josef Strauss or the equally extended "Morgenblätter" of Johann Strauss, but rather to such notable tid-bits as the former's "Moulinet" and "Ohne Sorgen" polkas, and the latter's "Stadt und Land" and "Auf der Jagd," all of them dances in the free-wheeling manner, rather than concert waltzes.

I hasten to add that I will not be averse to hearing the "Kaiserwalz" played in Carnegie Hall as it has never been played there, but there is a delicacy, flavor, and aliveness to these brief but far from casual pieces that perk the taste and lift the spirit. One features a gunshot, another a clanking bell not unlike that of a street car, while if you think that Lord Berners had something original in mind when he wrote voice parts for the orchestra (see the current "Triumph of Neptune" Suite reviewed on page 48), listen to "Ohne Sorgen" and discover otherwise.

Little of this would give as much pleasure as it does were it not for the quietly spectacular playing of the orchestra. Its way with the material is not conveyed by huge bursts of tone or swaying masses in the "Great Waltz" manner, but rather by a warmly turned phrase in the oboe, a delicate bassoon figuration, or a drum tap that has more suggestions of a pizzicato than of a blow. In terms of record sound, this is real London quality, which needs no elaboration. I may add that this carnival of surprises ends with one that each listener should discover for himself, but let me be the first to raise the query: "Why?"

—IRVING KOLODIN.

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Recordings Reports: Classical LP's

WORK, PERFORMER, DATA	REPORT
Beethoven: "Variations on a Theme by Diabelli" (Opus 120). Mieczyslaw Horszowski, piano. Vox 7730, $5.95.	An explicit blueprint for a performance of this taxing work, rather than the filled-in thing itself is the sum of Horszowski's considerable accomplishment here. The groundwork is clearly defined, also the relation of parts to each other. What one finds lacking is the creative imagination to merge all the elements in a full-scaled equivalent of Beethoven's thought. Good sound.
Beethoven: Sonatas in F and G minor (Opus 5, Nos. 1 and 2). Antonio Janigro, cello, and Carlo Zecchi, piano. Westminster 5170, $5.95.	This beginning of a comprehensive treatment of the piano-cello sonatas merges the talents of two artists not nearly as celebrated as they might be. As well as having a common conception of the works involved, they provide mutually beneficial influences through the matching of Janigro's solid scholarship with Zecchi's more individual flair. Excellent reproduction.
Brahms: "Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel." Eugene Istomin, piano. Columbia ML 2211, $4.45.	With or without reference to the highest standards of previous recordings of this music, Istomin's version is in the category of the fluent rather than the distinguished, with little more than surface values to commend it. Generally good piano sound, if not Columbia's best. The turn-over halfway through is questionable also.
"Dancers of Bali." Columbia ML 4618, $5.45.	Whatever values may inhere in the musical content of this disc, it is unquestionably a superlative example of the nuances and refinements, the extremes both of intensity and delicacy possible to embody in the grooves of a disc. Since the authenticity of the music itself has been generally commended during the New York run of the troupe with which it is affiliated, one may add more than routine thanks to Columbia for recognizing the journalistic function the recording company can exercise in such circumstances.
Victor Herbert: Concerto. Bernard Greenhouse, cello, with the American Recording Society Orchestra conducted by Max Schoenherr. ARS 24, $5.35.	At the risk of seeming to slight the beautifully formulated, well-performed "Trois Poèmes Juifs" of Ernest Bloch, which Walter Hendl directs with eloquent effect on the other side of this disc, this arrangement nevertheless respects a sizable musical phenomenon: a major work in classical form by a man best known for the pretty tunes of "Naughty Marietta," "Sweethearts," etc. The immediate question that occurs, of course, is how would it sound if one didn't know the name of the composer? The answer, for me, is "pretty good," in a kind of post-Saint-Saëns-Boellmann idiom. Greenhouse plays it with every technical resource. However, one must mention that the Bloch is much the better recording. Greenhouse's cello is well reproduced, not so the orchestral background.
Liszt: "Todtentanz." Fabienne Jacquinot, piano, with Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. M-G-M E 182, $3.	Jacquinot is a more than competent artist whose qualities, in this work and the associated piano concerto of Rimsky-Korsakov, add (at the quoted prices) to a sound value. Objectively, the Badura-Skoda Korsakov for Westminster is more brilliant, as is the Brailowsky-Reiner "Todtentanz" on RCA-Victor. Good balance, in any case.
Mozart: Concerto in G (K.313), etc. John Wummer, flute, with orchestra conducted by Pablo Casals. Columbia SL 168, $21.59.	The most notable fact about this second volume of issues from the Perpignan Festival of 1951 is the availability, in generally qualified versions, of the first flute concerto (K.313), and four piano concerti: the K.271, in E flat with Dame Myra Hess; the E flat, K.449, with Eugene Istomin; the E flat, K.482, with Rudolf Serkin; and the B flat, K.595, by Horszowski. On the whole, I'd say these were more satisfactory than the performance issued in Volume I, mostly because Casals is less insistent on his rhythmic values than in the preceding issue. However, I would not put the Wummer performance in the class of the bygone one by Moyse, and Istomin is decidedly a limited performer—especially in Mozart—to be included in this sequence. The sound is clear, but unfortunately without sufficient resonance.
Mozart: "Deutsche Tanze." Erich Kloss conducting the Frankeland Orchestra. Lyrichord LL 31, $5.95.	Twenty-one melodic gems from the Mozartian vaults (K.509, K.571, K.600, and K.605 are represented) strung together by conductor Kloss on a durable thread of interest. Clear, crisp playing, reproduced with tonal qualites suitable to the material. Kloss is no vibrant spirit with the baton, but the playing is well organized.
Offenbach: "La Vie Parisienne." Jennie Tourel, mezzo-soprano, with orchestra conducted by Jean Morel. Columbia ML 4608, $5.45.	Lively excerpts from "Barbe-Bleu," "La Belle Hélène," "La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein," etc., arranged by Manuel Rosenthal (of "Gaité Parisienne" fame) and sung by Tourel with considerable spirit. However, her vocal skill is not always equal to what she seeks to accomplish. On the second side she sings the four prominent solo scenes from "Carmen" ("Habanera," "Seguidilla," "Chanson de Bohème," and the "Card Scene") forcefully but with unpleasant vocal mannerisms. Jean Morel adds more than a little to both sides with his conducting.
Schmidt: Quintet for strings and piano. Barylli Quartet with Joerg Demus, piano. Westminster WL 5158, $5.95.	A little-known work of decided melodic appeal by the composer of "Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln," a choral work highly regarded in Vienna. Originally written for the one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein, it is played here in a version for the usual two hands. Strong playing, well-reproduced.
Schumann: Quartets, Opus 43 (Nos. 1 and 3). Curtis String Quartet. Westminster WL 5166, $5.95.	Beautifully studied, well-integrated performances of two works which should be better known than they are. The style of reproduction resembles that previously offered by Westminster in the Curtis playing of Brahms, but the proportions are better adjusted.
Sibelius: Concerto in D minor. Isaac Stern, violin, with orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia ML 4550, $5.45.	A collaboration decidedly more successful than the earlier one pairing these interpreters in the Brahms concerto. Beecham delivers a particularly concentrated version of the orchestra score, against Stern's sometimes exaggerated playing of the solo part. Powerful recording with a tendency to stridency in the upper range of the violin. With it is a spirited version of Sibelius's not too important "Historic Scenes." Fine detail, in balance and clarity, on both. —Irving Kolodin.

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Bach Around the Calendar

THE borderline between Bach's cantatas and oratorios is an ill-defined one. The great "Christmas Oratorio" is actually a series of six cantatas, originally performed not all at once but on six successive Sundays in that season. The work Bach called "Ascension Oratorio," being all in one section, is published in the Bach Gesellschaft as "Cantata No. 11." Together with these seasonal oratorios the new releases include "Christen, ätzet diesen Tag" and "Der Himmel lacht, die Erde jubilieret," which are works without narrative, appropriate to Christmas and Easter, generally known simply as Cantatas 31 and 63.

The new "Weihnachts Oratorium" ("Christmas Oratorio"), which enlists a Viennese group under Ferdinand Grossman (Vox PL 7713, $17.85), is the second in the field. Just two years ago Hans Grischkat of Stuttgart offered the work by way of Renaissance in a performance now reissued in popular-priced reprint (Remington R 199-117, $9.96). The main charge against it was that the music's heavenly lengths were made to seem interminable by slow tempi. The soloists were generally good, though the tenor Evangelist had not quite mastered the trick of delivering his recitative with the naturalness of speech.

As if in answer to these criticisms, the Viennese leader favors brisk and businesslike tempi; the movements pass one into the other with hardly a pause for breath. The sound of chorus and orchestra is well reproduced, the balance mostly good though not altogether consistent. Despite the claim that the work is unabridged, the music has been trimmed (mostly in the long *da capo* sections) so that each of the six cantatas fits neatly on a record side. One omission, probably due to an overenthusiastic tape editor, is the important recitative preceding the "Ehre sei Gott" chorus. The soloists as a group are less good than their predecessors, though the tenor, Majkut, is an improvement. He is, however, better in the recitatives than the arias. Mme. Hermann-Braun, the contralto, sings richly when she gets going, but she starts uncertainly. Surely it is not her fault that the lovely "Schlafe, mein Liebster" is so hurried and unatmospheric. There is some confusion in the printing of the text booklet. All in all, a switch-over from the old set to the new is not recommended; the really satisfactory "Christmas Oratorio" is still to make an appearance.

The "Christmas Cantata," No. 63, comes likewise from Vienna but with Michael Gielen at the helm (Bach Guild BG 518, $5.95). Unfortunately, his is not an inspired performance, despite some good work by the alto Rössl-Majdan and obvious competence on the part of the other singers and orchestra. Felix Prohaska in charge of some of the same forces infuses more life into his reading of the "Easter Cantata," No. 31 (Bach Guild BG 512, $5.95). I am not sure the device of reducing the elaborate choruses to solo voices is the best possible solution for the problem of clarity, but the performance moves. Anny Felbermayer deserves a word for her singing of the soprano aria "Letzte Stunde, brich herein," which brings this festive composition to its sober concluding thoughts on death and the future life. Seven Easter chorales fill out the second side.

The "Ascension Oratorio" returns us to Stuttgart and Mr. Grischkat (Lyrichord LL 34, $5.95). This is the second recording of the cantata, the first, in English, having for its chief distinction the singing of Kathleen Ferrier (London LS 160, $4.95). Aside from the greater authenticity of this German account of the music, there is not too much to choose between performances. The Stuttgart contralto, Ruth Michaelis, also sings richly and impressively, but Werner Hohmann, the tenor, is rather ineffectual. Mechanically the new recording has the edge for its greater effect of space and better balance.

Like father, like son: Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach went on composing fine church music, though he had, as he thought, progressed to a more modern style than his father's. His "Magnificat" is worthy to stand beside the choral works of Haydn, and its melodiousness should easily win it popularity. A Viennese quartet, Siebert, Rössl-Majdan, Kmentt, and Braun, with chorus and orchestra under Prohaska (Bach Guild BG 516-17, $11.90) give the score a rather hectic workout. I suspect a few more rehearsals would have made for smoother going, especially in the long and elaborate fugue which crowns the work.

—PHILIP L. MILLER.

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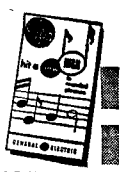

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Schweitzer Returns

TO be an authority on the music of J. S. Bach is a life work in itself. To be in addition a preacher, a penetrating writer on theology, a doctor of medicine, and enough of an organist to make performing pay for one's education is almost beyond comprehension, but that is Albert Schweitzer. The better part of two decades ago Columbia brought out three albums of Bach's choral-preludes and preludes and fugues as interpreted by this dedicated man whose accomplishments and approach toward life set him apart from other mortals. Now Columbia offers a newly recorded issue of Schweitzer's Bach in SL-175 ($16.58)—three twelve-inch LP's. Basically the album is of "important" Bach, such as the C major Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue, the better known choral preludes, including two versions of "O Mensch Bewein' dein Sünde Gross," and a number of preludes and fugues. For some reason the Mendelssohn Organ Sonata No. 6, in D minor, also appears in the album as the sole non-Bach offering, although it was not available for review with the test pressings received.

They were made in Gunzbach, Alsace, on a new instrument designed by Dr. Schweitzer himself. Its sound is full and rich, and the reed stops, so essential for tonal character, are particularly well voiced. The tone of the organ is enhanced by the natural liveness of the church auditorium, and the recording engineers have done fairly well in capturing the spatial feeling, although in two or three instances they have too quickly cut off the fading reverberation at the end of selections.

In a certain sense these new recordings date back half a century. In 1902, Charles-Marie Widor, the composer-organist with whom the young Albert had been studying, had complained of the lack of a book on the nature of Bach's art for French readers. Schweitzer, who had known French since childhood, determined to fill the need. By 1905, when it was published, the musician-student-theologian had laid the groundwork in his mind for his convictions concerning the interpretation of Bach's music. That the convictions are strong, that they are not always those of other organists, is obvious on hearing the records.

In Schweitzer's own words—from the 1908 German edition of his "J. S. Bach"—"Bach is played altogether too fast. Music which presupposes a visual comprehension of lines of sound advancing side by side becomes for the listener a chaos, if a too rapid tempo makes this comprehension impossible."

Not all students will agree with Schweitzer's tempi or with his phrasing, but what he has done he has done with loving care and deep thought. He brings to the listener a clarity of line that makes the consonant voices easily followed and understood. Schweitzer is not a virtuoso performer displaying his skill, but rather an artist with a message to convey, a feeling about Bach to share with his listeners. In view of his approach to Bach's music, he could probably be considered to be at his best in the choral-preludes. However, to this listener's taste, Schweitzer's desire to avoid an excess of speed is carried so far that Bach's music, in his playing, loses much of the feeling of fluidity and movement it might have and becomes almost lugubrious. Added to a lack of variety in registration, this perpetual slowness fails to show a Bach who was human and spirited. We do not meet the complete Sebastian.

AMONG those record collectors who add the Schweitzer discs to their libraries surely there will be some who would not have done so without the efforts of the indefatigable man whose latest record release also comes up for review at this time. Those of us in the East who are able to follow the Sunday morning broadcasts of E. Power Biggs have heard some of the music in this potpourri, called "Cathedral Voluntaries and Processionals" (Columbia ML 4603, $5.45).

Biggs, if through nothing more than ubiquity, has increased current interest in organ music to a greater degree than anyone else in this country; this baker's dozen of unrelated selections will add to his efforts. Wide chronological ground is covered, from Henry Purcell's "Trumpet Voluntary" to Richard Strauss, who composed for the organ a "Solemn Processional for Festival Occasions." Bach, Marcello, Schubert, and Vaughan Williams are represented as well. Biggs's lucid readings and technical command of the instrument need no praise, and it appears that in recent months he has happily relaxed his style somewhat, giving his playing an increased feeling of freedom. This is a splendid record that makes the organ a real concert-hall instrument.

—DAVID HEBB.

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Frequency Response Enshrined

EDGAR M. VILLCHUR

THE audio enthusiast distrusts the terminology of advertisements for commercial radio-phonographs. He does not want to be told that equipment has "glorious tone" but that it has certain technical specifications that ensure a given degree of fidelity. Such specifications create an audio jargon which sometimes seems as esoteric as jive talk.

The most widely used expressions in this technical jargon are those that have to do with frequency response. These are so common that they are sometimes meant to be implicit in questions like, "What'll it do?" The speaker concentrates his attention on one characteristic of the equipment, and he assumes that his question will be interpreted as referring to a pair of numbers, representing low and high frequency limits in the audio spectrum, which define the range of the unit. No one item of technical data has been so enshrined by the audio world as has frequency or pitch response, especially that aspect of it which has to do with frequency extremes.

Frequency response, along with several other characteristics of equal weight, is indeed a matter of major significance, but the term has on occasion been taken to be almost synonymous with fidelity. A more widespread error has been to misconstrue its meaning, so that the primary question of the relative handling of sound at different frequencies is submerged in favor of a secondary one—the question of how high and how low a pitch can be reproduced.

There are two aspects of frequency response, each of which may be illustrated quite readily by parallels in the work of the organ builder. Since there is no standard organ keyboard, a decision must be made as to what the lowest and highest notes are to be. This is the range. Evenness over the frequency range covered is accomplished by the "voicer," who adjusts each pipe so that there is no incongruous change of intensity from one note to the next. This is the smoothness of response. For the organ and for the reproducing audio component the second is ordinarily the more important consideration, unless the range is restricted so severely as to be totally inadequate.

The most familiar effect associated with poor frequency response is the relatively weak reproduction of harmonic overtones in the frequency region above 5,000 cycles. The result is to impart a general tonal quality to the music which is described as "mellow" by its admirers and "muffled" by those who disapprove. In any case the incisive timbre of the reeds, brasses, and strings is watered down; the resinous edge of bowed strings, the metallic quality of the harpsichord, the sharp, brassy sound of cymbals, are totally obscured or heard as through a plush curtain.

But another effect of poor frequency response which produces an equally unnatural sound, and which is as prevalent as the one described above, is the undue emphasis given to notes in the upper bass frequency region. This is usually caused by mechanical speaker resonance or by acoustical resonance of the speaker cabinet, producing the well-known quality called boom. And probably the most annoying effect of erratic frequency response, also most typically contributed by loudspeakers, is the emphasis of frequencies which lie in the region of three or four thousand cycles. Such emphasis creates a shrill, particularly unpleasant sound. Overenthusiastic novitiates to high fidelity sometimes listen to this kind of tone with gritted teeth, refusing to turn down the treble control lest they kill the "highs."

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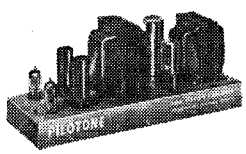

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response data of audio equipment, then, we must be concerned with both the range of frequencies covered and with the amount of variation tolerated. Olson's "Acoustical Engineering," virtually a bible in the field, lists the frequency extremes required to reproduce orchestral music with perfect apparent fidelity as 40 and 14,000 cycles. (Pipe organ fundamentals may be lower than 40 cycles, but such tones are not produced very often.) Studies in detectable differences in audio band-width have indicated that a reduction of this range to about 65-10,000 cycles would be just noticeable. These last figures may therefore be taken as the common-sense range for average high-fidelity equipment, although the wider range is of course preferable.

AS WE have seen, a statement of frequency limits is virtually meaningless as an index to quality unless we know the smoothness of response, described by the amount of variation that exists within those limits. Such information can be given by a graph which is not too difficult to read, or by a statement of the maximum variation above and below the norm, in terms such as "plus or minus x decibels."

Amplifiers are currently being made in which the amount of variation tolerated is only a fraction of a decibel, meaning that the variation is so small as to be indetectable, but these standards are far higher than those currently provided in loudspeaker performance. A wide-range speaker whose performance does not stray more than plus or minus five decibels above and below the reference level is indeed excellent in this characteristic.

The subjective test for frequency response should thus not consist exclusively of listening for the elusive tinkle of the triangle or for the double bass's E string plucked wide open. More significant is the presence or absence of unnatural shrillness, of an overheavy upper bass, of artificial quality caused by emphasis or inadequate intensity at various points of the reproduced frequency range. It is only after the response has been established as *even* that the extension of the frequency range takes its rightfully important place alongside of low distortion, ample power capability, low noise, and other characteristics of high-fidelity reproduction.

And so the expression "What does it go to?" is not a good one, even for audio slang. When frequency response data is complete, however, an important technical index is provided to the quality of the reproduced music that we can expect to hear.

THE OTHER SIDE

(*Continued from page 45*)

Oiseau-Lyre and to hear what she has been up to. Mme. Dyer is an amateur in the best sense of the word, and one feels that the sole criterion governing the issuance of her records is their ability to give pleasure. For this reason, and despite imposing projects such as her complete "Well-Tempered Clavier" and "Christmas Oratorio," her records in America are often apt to get lost in the shuffle, and this is a great injustice. One of her finest new releases is a complete "Winterreise" (on one disc) sung by the English baritone Bruce Boyce, with Jean Germain at the piano. This is a fine lieder record; Boyce is not a powerful singer, but his light and smooth voice responds flexibly to the demands of a splendid intelligence, the disc fits the living-room scale of performance too often neglected these days by record-makers.

The musical season in Paris has reached full intensity, which means that on most nights a concertgoer might wish he were divisible by three to do justice to the opportunities at hand. After six months the major attraction continues to be Rameau's "Les Indes Galantes" as given the full treatment at the Opéra. There is a certain prestige value in seeing this production; aside from the visual and auditory stimulation of the performance itself, the possession of a ticket usually means that one has been willing to stand in line as long as three hours, often in damp and bitter cold, waiting for ticket windows to open. Despite the raised prices and the "*complet*" notices posted a week before any performance, the production has been a costly one for the Opéra and will soon have to be withdrawn. Encouraged however by the tremendous popularity of this spectacle, the management has announced revivals for next year of "Oberon" and "Boris Godounov," each to be mounted with the same sort of "grande luxe."

The first performance in France of Stravinsky's "Rake's Progress" will take place at Strasbourg in mid-December, conducted by Ernest Bour. The press has taken this opportunity to chide the Parisian impresarios for allowing an outlying community to steal a march on them. It has been very well, they feel, for Parisians to give enthusiastic support to three performances of Beethoven's "Ninth" in recent weeks (one beautifully conducted by Ferenc Fricsay), but it is high time they began to live in the present.

—ALAN RICH.

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Pop Roundup

TWO single discs recently received stand out from the current crop of what the anthropologists group as "social music." One is a Negro spiritual, TROUBLE IN MY WAY, by the Dixie Humming Birds, released by Peacock Records (1705), a Texas company that specializes in such material. Two male voices alternate in the lead, while the group characteristically echoes the sermon in harmony and rhythm. With the help of a trap drummer, the side builds its rhythm and emotion to fever pitch. This is the real stuff, straight from the camp meeting. It bears little resemblance to the glamorized quartet fare one encounters in night clubs. The other disc is a dance record representing, I believe, the first distinctive musical approach since the golden age of the swing bands. It's a pleasant little pop tune, NINA NEVER KNEW, played by the Sauter-Finegan Orchestra (RCA 47-5065). Eddie Sauter and Bill Finegan, prior to this coventure, produced some of the more provocative dance scores performed by Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, and a few other first-class aggregations. On their own now, the boys have produced a brand of music that features the arranger, rather than individual instrumentalists, as the virtuoso. It seems to me that Sauter and Finegan have done this while steering clear of the harmonic clichés and disinterested air of the bop or "cool" jazz schools. Their harmony, even in purely instrumental passages, attempts to underline the mood and meaning of the lyrics—a factor that could eventually establish for this group a bond with the mass market despite the strangeness, at first encounter, of the sensitively drawn harmonies.

The instrumentation is a sharp departure from the familiar sax-brass ensemble employed with only slight variations by virtually every other dance band. Startling contrasts are created by using the brass choir wide open, then muted. Flutes are featured, as are oboe, clarinets, and celeste to lesser degrees. A choir of voices woven in and out of this—with or without words—helps create suspense or climax. In NINA, the title itself conforms to a lilting rhythm figure which the arranger has seized as a unifying device. All of which may sound like a great deal of bother over a pop tune, but perhaps the dance bands haven't been bothering enough in recent years. Of course, this S-F combination is quite unlikely to become more than a "recording" band. The intricate arrangements, to be played properly, require the most versatile musicians that can be recruited from the New York network studios. The cost of trotting such men out on the ballroom-theatre circuit might be prohibitive. Incidentally, the vocalist on NINA is Joe Mooney, who with an Alec Wilder-ish quartet created something of a sensation about six years ago. And if you'd like to delve deeper into Sauter-Finegania, RCA Victor has grouped eight previously issued selections on a long-player, NEW DIRECTIONS IN MUSIC (RCA LPM-3115). "April in Paris" is especially good.

Les Brown, perhaps the most successful of the modern bands, owes a great deal to the old Lunceford band as well as to the bop movement. With a regular spot on the Bob Hope radio show, Brown could afford to keep off the road and to retain some of the top West Coast musicians. His latest LP, danceable and interesting musically, is entitled MUSICAL WEATHER VANE (Coral CRL 56077), because it includes such titles as "Clouds," "Rain," "Heat Wave," and five others that you can probably guess. Speaking of Lunceford, Columbia's George Avakian has compiled a program of typical sides by the late leader dating back a dozen or more years. Many of the modern bands have attempted to re-create the rocking beat of this band, duplicating the widely spaced harmonies and the instrumental voicings—even employing some of the key Lunceford sidemen—

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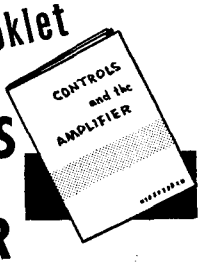

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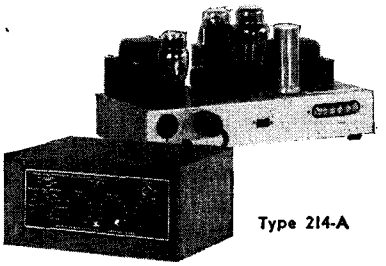

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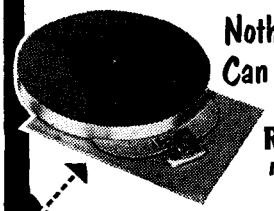

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Ralph Flanagan has built himself a profitable career perpetuating the Glenn Miller sound as well as the Miller devotion to the dancers who pay the freight. Flanagan, a campus favorite, may be heard at his best in a set, THE OLD OX ROAD (RCA LPM 3099, featuring such selections as "Little Fraternity Pin," "Betty Co-Ed," and "It's Dark on Observatory Hill." The McCoy, or rather the Miller may be heard in a collection of reissues, THIS IS GLENN MILLER (RCA LPT 3002), gleaned from Glenn's 1939-41 *oeuvre*, and including his beautiful "Adios" and the two-sided "Anvil Chorus." Even better than that is GLENN MILLER CONCERT, VOL. 3 (RCA LPT 3001), a group of recordings made in 1940-42 from actual radio broadcasts, none of which has been commercially available before.

There's a spirit present here that the band was not always able to carry into the formal recording studio. The arrangements, several of which are by the above-mentioned Bill Finegan, are not always what we have come to consider typical Miller, and jazz solos are featured with some frequency. Most of the soloists, incidentally, are leading their own bands today. Tex Beneke, Billy May, Hal McIntyre, and the wonderful Bobby Hackett are among those present. Miller's own arrangement of "Dipper Mouth Blues" features the late maestro on trombone as well.

A few more of the Golden Age dance discs are available in popular reissues. THIS IS ARTIE SHAW (RCA LPT 3003) includes a couple of the clarinetist-author's earliest and best, "Copenhagen" and "Back Bay Shuffle." THIS IS TOMMY DORSEY (RCA 3005) features his vocal discoveries Frank Sinatra ("This Love of Mine"), Jo Stafford ("For You"), Connie Haines, and the Pied Pipers. All of these were cut primarily for dancing.

The best tango set I've come across lately is TANGO TIME (MGM E-175), recorded in England by Philip Green and his Orchestra. If you prefer to sit out the tango, this makes for pleasant listening and good digestion. The selections are old and new. No tango program would be complete without "Blue Tango" and "El Choclo."

Xavier Cugat, who was at one time reluctant to go along with the mambo tide, now plays the Cuban rhythm as well as anybody. MAMBO AT THE WALDORF (Columbia CL 6213) is his contribution to our newest indoor sport. —BILL SIMON.

OPERA IN ENGLISH?

(*Continued from page* 39)

not clarify many nuances in the libretto. If in this uncomplicated and popular opera the devotees still are unable to tell you exactly what Schaunard was saying in his narrative or explain why Mimi's real name is Lucia (without having read Henri Murger's "La Vie de Bohème"), I see no need for an apologia. Mr. Warren may worry about what will become of his favorite phrases such as "Chi son? Son' una poeta," but such things are incidental problems in the adaptation of the principal arias to which there is traditional partisanship. "Chi son?" happens to be involved in Rodolfo's famous narrative, and he explains his point of view about life, describing himself as "Alone—for I am a poet," which is, of course, not a translation.

"La Bohème" is but a chapter in the case history about opera in English, which before long will have many chapters and will be an irritating volume to many of the hard core. But it is possible that they too will come around to liking operas despite the fact that they understand them. If "La Bohème" is unsuccessful, it will not prove that opera in English is an "artistic fallacy." It will simply be a mistake, like many mistakes in the theatre where the issue of our native tongue is not involved. This argument is for greater understanding, leading to greater musical appreciation on the part of greater numbers who will be persuaded to go to more operas. Is the cause Philistine?

Review Resume

BEETHOVEN: "Pathétique" and "Moonlight" Sonatas. Ania Dorfman, piano. RCA Victor LBC 1029. *SR* Dec. 13.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 3. Benno Moisewitch, piano, with Sir Malcolm Sargent conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. RCA Victor LBC 1012. *SR* Dec. 13.

BRAHMS: "Variations on a Theme by Haydn"; also TCHAIKOVSKY: "Francesca da Rimini." Issay Dobrowen conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. RCA Victor LBC 1010. *SR* Dec. 13.

CHOPIN: Ballade in G minor, etc. Byron Janis, piano. RCA Victor LBC 1030. *SR* Dec. 13.

CORELLI: "Christmas Concerto." Virtuosi di Roma. Decca DL 9649. *SR* Dec. 20.

BENNY GOODMAN JAZZ CONCERT NO. 2. Columbia set SL 180. *SR* Dec. 6.

IPPOLITOV-IVANOV: "Caucasian Sketches," etc. Nicolai Malko conducting the Danish National Orchestra. RCA Victor LBC 1019. *SR* Dec. 13.

MENOTTI: "Amahl and the Night Visitors." Thomas Schippers conducting, with Chet Allen as Amahl. RCA Victor LM 1701. *SR* Dec. 20.

PROKOFIEV: "Peter and the Wolf"; also TCHAIKOVSKY: "Nutcracker" Suite. Igor Markevitch conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. RCA Victor LBC 1015. *SR* Dec. 13.

SCHUTZ: "Nativity." Colosseum CLPS 1034. *SR* Dec. 20.

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Enter "Entré"

COLUMBIA'S contribution to the creation of a reprint catalogue parallels, to some extent, that provided by RCA Victor in the Bluebird list, on which comment was offered in the issue of December 13. The extent to which these items (on a new label called "Entré") do or do not parallel RCA Victor's is closely related to the fact that Columbia's backlog is by no means as substantial as RCA's, and it has not seen fit to include any records especially created for this purpose in its first issue. As in the instance of Bluebird, Entré releases are priced uniformly at $3.10.

Of the half-dozen items I have sampled, the best, in performance and economic value, is the C major Symphony of Schubert in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performance directed by Frederick Stock (RL 3008), which was available in 78-rpm days as Columbia album 403. It is in most respects a knowing, well-phrased treatment of Schubert, though some of the rhythmic details become unsteady, and the scherzo is decidedly nervous in its accents. However, the quality of sound is even and well balanced, the amount of music offered for the stated price a good value, if not precisely a bargain.

If it is performance alone that counts, the venerable version of Handel's "Water Music" by Sir Hamilton Harty and the London Philharmonic Orchestra might be recommended as a desirable addition to a record library whether one is price conscious or not. Soundwise it has definite limitations. However, no one else has understood this music as well as Harty, and the coupling with selections from Handel's "Fireworks" music gives us not only congruent masterpieces, but another good performance in rather better reproduction (RL 3019).

The other issues are decidedly variable, with the most interest from the least likely quarter: the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony under the direction of Howard Barlow. The choice of repertory is excellent, for Barlow's direction of both the B flat Symphony of Schubert (No. 2) and the "Overture," "Dream Pantomime," and "Waltz" from Humperdinck's "Hänsel und Gretel" is sensitive, assured, and always appropriate (RL 3010).

The choice of two items from the series made by Dimitri Mitropoulos and the Minneapolis Orchestra does not encourage too much hope for the resources available to Columbia for its Entré series, for those were technically well below the standard of the time in which they were made, and not much can be done to improve them. The more attractive performance is that of Mendelssohn's "Scotch" Symphony, which Mitropoulos understands well and delivers with a good deal of animation (RL 3017). The Franck Symphony, however, tends more to animation than to understanding (RL 3006). In both, a rather woolly tone quality in the strings and an opaque kind of brass leave one without a real musical image.

A recurrent question about these discs—namely, how much playing time the buyer may be expected to enjoy for his $3.10—is most prominent in a selection of excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" as performed by Antal Dorati with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The first side runs to just about twelve minutes, with much blank space remaining; and the second totals but little more. Not so long ago Columbia was pointing proudly to its coupling of two Beethoven symphonies (Nos. 2 and 4) on a single twelve-inch LP providing sixty-seven minutes of playing time. Is the purchaser who pays $3.10 for a disc containing a total of twenty-five minutes of music actually getting a "bargain" when the same company provides nearly three times as much music on another disc for less than twice as much?

I raise these questions in no spirit of accusation, and mindful of a letter or two I have already received taking exception to my remarks about the Bluebird list. The attitude therein expressed was, approximately, should not the companies be applauded for an innovation long desired, rather than chided for the way in which they have launched it? My observation, in the instances of both Entré and Bluebird, is that the innovation is beyond reproach, but the thinking on both sides rather fuzzy, if for quite different reasons. We'd certainly like to see the programs prosper, but they'll have to be organized along sounder lines before they will, save accidentally. —THE EDITOR.

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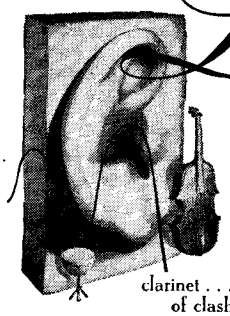

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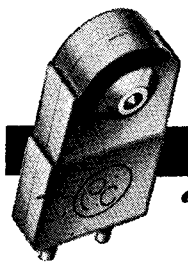

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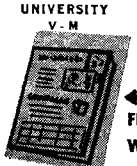

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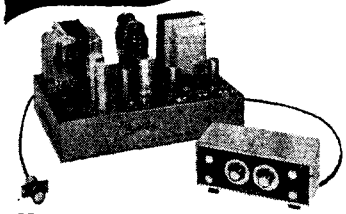

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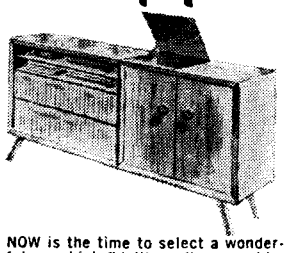

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Authentic "Boris"

THE recorded history of Moussorgsky's "Boris Godounov" embraces a steady progression marked by a number of noteworthy steps: the isolated Chaliapin recordings, of limited veracity if unquestionable vitality, brought together on RCA Victor LCT-3; the eloquent, if Italianate, miscellany by Pinza on Columbia ML 4115; the notable Kipnis survey (Russian), which has not been given the honor due it in the new speed; and the comprehensive but badly flawed complete version with Pirogov from the USSR (on Colosseum 124/6 and Period SPL 554). All are faced down, overwhelmed, obliterated by the powerful new version from Paris with Boris Christoff as Boris and Issay Dobrowen conducting, created by HMV and issued here jointly with RCA Victor as LHMV 6400 on four LP's ($22.68).

Some factual virtues may be set forth together. The text is Russian, the score that of Rimsky-Korsakov, and intact save for the following omissions —an optional cut of pages 56-60 (in the B and H piano score) in the first scene with Pimenn; then pages 179-190 (involving Rangoni and Dimitri), also 200-204 (Dimitri with Marina). The recording from first to last is first class; the musical execution, with some incidental lapses to be noted below, on a high level; the sense of drama remarkably sustained, though "Boris" is far from an ideal score to be rendered with justice on records, since the music alone does not always provide adequate equivalents for the visual elements of the drama.

However, this is a masterful "Boris" and one which will be heard with pleasure for years to come not alone or primarily for the resourceful singing of Christoff, but even more for the sustained musical direction of Dobrowen. Obviously, there can be no successful "Boris" without a notable Boris; but there are long stretches where he is inaudible, and it is in these, especially, that Dobrowen—who has matured steadily as a conductor since he was heard in America fifteen years ago—makes his unifying conception effective.

Some apprehensions had been aroused by the information that Christoff had undertaken the virtuoso feat of singing not only the music of Boris—of itself a taxing assigment—but also that of Pimenn and Varlaam. Credit Christoff not only with the imagination and resource to differentiate the vocal characters involved, but also with a willingness to recognize the relationship of each to the drama. The only episode where the device seemed stagy is at the end, where Pimenn appears before the dying Czar, and Christoff is called upon to provide both voices. Knowledge of what was to come inclined one to resist the effect that was achieved; I daresay that a listener ignorant of the vocal facts would have accepted both sounds as satisfying.

On the other hand, some additional doublings come off with variable results. Eugenia Zareska is a suitable voice for Marina, but an overmature one for the Czar's son, Feodor; Lydia Romanova manages well the music of the Nurse, but quavers uncertainly in that of the Innkeeper. Kim Borg and André Bielecki, who also shift from one role to another, are consistently good; Ludmilla Lebedeva, who sings Xénia, is decidedly shrill.

The substantial fact is, however, that this is a thoroughly prepared, carefully organized valuation of Moussorgsky, with an always absorbing and sometimes commanding delivery of the title role by Christoff and a consistently informative treatment of the score by Dobrowen. Under other considerations of time and space, adequate recognition might be given to the fine singing of Nicolai Gedda as Dimitri, to André Bielecki's outstanding Chouisky, and Wassili Pasternak's notable work as the Simpleton. Excellent choral singing (by the Choeurs Russes de Paris) and admirable instrumental work by the Orchestre National de la Radiodifussion Française contribute considerably to the end result.

The assumption that first things must come first (where the interests of record consumers are involved) has deterred any consideration of the durable values in Moussorgsky's score. It is perhaps superfluous to add that all the references, from Christoff's superb delivery of the title role down to the brief but touching music of the Simpleton, are in terms of a masterpiece never before given such enduring life for home enjoyment. This applies not only to the individual values involved, but as much to the mechanical composite. RCA has followed through on its scholarly obligation by providing a booklet with an excellent essay on the opera by Gerald Abraham, and a new transliteration of the Russian text coupled with a clear text in English, both of the latter by Louis Biancolli.

—IRVING KOLODIN.

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Letters to the *RECORDINGS* Editor

"Opera in English"

▶ LIKE SO MANY OTHER discussions of the what-language-for-opera problem, Dale Warren's article "Opera in English" [*SR* Nov. 29] introduced more predilections than principles. It seems to me that productions of opera—whether vernacular or foreign-language—should be judged in relation to the essential aim of all responsible interpretive art, that is, a faithful revelation of the artistic purpose of the original creator or creators and the degree to which it was achieved.

It has been possible, during recent seasons in New York, to give this principle a "laboratory" test so far as it concerns opera. The Metropolitan Opera has frequently given "Le Nozze di Figaro" in Italian, while the New York City Opera has been giving it in English. I have attended both productions many times. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind as to which one more vividly reveals to an American opera-goer the artistic aims and the masterly achievement of Da Ponte and Mozart. After the vernacular version, the foreign-language production is weak soup indeed.

GUY STEVENS.

New York, N. Y.

▶ ALTHOUGH A RELATIVELY recent practitioner of the world's most thankless trade —that of the writer of English opera versions—I cannot help getting slightly bored with the perpetual feud over opera in English. Nevertheless, it pains me to see *The Saturday Review* join the group of opera-in-the-original snobs.

This snob argument was recently summed up much more concisely and also much more revealingly than by Mr. Warren by an opera habitue in San Francisco, who after a performance of "Rosenkavalier" in my new English version remarked: "I really don't care a bit what language your opera is sung in as long as I can be sure I don't understand it."

Now it is all very well for Mr. Warren to look down his editorial nose on those benighted Europeans who insist on having their operas sung in the language of the country where they are performed, but as a native European, who is now an American, may I be permitted to ask whether it has occurred to your writer that Italy, France, Germany, and Austria, despite their despicable linguistic habits, have led the development of opera through more than three glorious centuries, while it is a sad though undeniable fact that in this great and rich country of ours still no operatic life worth that name exists. Has it furthermore occurred to Mr. Warren that between this shameful situation and his snob attitude toward operatic texts there exists a very close connection, indeed the connection of cause and consequence? If it hasn't, it ought to. . . .

All this may be nothing but gray theory. If you want to try out this argument in real life, I suggest that you have one of your critics compare the public's reaction to a "Figaro" in Italian with that same public's reaction to a "Figaro" in English and if your critic then is not struck by the difference between the funeral-parlor atmosphere in the Italian "Figaro" and the amused entertainment of an audience in a good English "Figaro" performance, I solemnly promise to mend my ways and rewrite the great "Alcestis" aria to read "Divinities of sticks," as the partisans of sound for sound's sake no doubt would have me.

JOHN GUTMAN.

New York, N. Y.

RCA's Future Plans

▶ WHAT IS THE LATEST word on the "Otello" conducted by Toscanini?

LESTER W. GELLER.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Plans call for its release in the autumn of 1953, subject to the Maestro's final approval.*

▶ SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS have mentioned that last March, at the same time as the Beethoven First and Ninth, Toscanini also recorded Beethoven's Second, Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh. When, if ever, can we expect these recordings?

JAMES GROB.

Fremont, O.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *RCA hopes to issue all nine Beethoven symphonies, in new Toscanini recordings, next spring. They will be packaged as a "limited edition." Individual issues of Nos. 2, 4, 6, and 7 will be available later on.*

▶ AS ONE RECORD COLLECTOR who is not satisfied with any of the available LP versions of the complete Schubert "Winterreise," I am wondering if RCA Victor might reissue on LP the historic HMV set superbly sung by Gerhard Hüsch.

ERIC OFFENBACHER.

New York, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *RCA has ordered the masters from Europe with a view to LP issue. The decision depends on the sound quality that can be achieved.*

▶ THERE HAVE BEEN PERSISTENT RUMORS that Flagstad has recorded a complete "Tristan." Could you throw any light on this subject?

A. L. ANDERSON.

Chicago, Ill.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The recording was made in June, has been approved by Flagstad and Furtwängler, and will be issued by RCA next autumn.*

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